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The Viola in the Twenty-First Century: A Sound Recording and Performance Guide of Peter Dayton's "Fantasy for Viola and Piano," Christopher Hallum's "A Day in Monroe County," and Christopher Lowry's "Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola" and "Suite for Viola and Piano"

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THE VIOLA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
A SOUND RECORDING AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE OF PETER
DAYTON'S *FANTASY FOR VIOLA AND PIANO*, CHRISTOPHER HALLUM'S
A DAY IN MONROE COUNTY, AND CHRISTOPHER LOWRY'S *MILESTONE*
MINIATURES FOR SOLO VIOLA AND SUITE FOR VIOLA AND PIANO.

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The College of Music and Dramatic Arts

by
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ABSTRACT

The standard repertoire of the viola is quite small when compared to that of the rest of the string family; the instrument came of age in the twentieth century, which brought about the first important virtuosos and compositions for the instrument. In the twenty-first century, the repertoire of the viola continues to grow, and the author, being both a violist and composer, feels it is important to continue contributing quality music to the instrument, both through his own compositions and through working with other living composers.

The purpose of this research was to record a full-length CD of new works for viola and provide descriptions and performance guides of these pieces, as well as biographical sketches of their respective composers and a detailed guide to the recording and editing process. The project is in two main parts: the CD, which was entirely engineered, recorded, and edited by the author and performer; and the paper, which talks about the recorded pieces as well as a sort of practical guide to self-producing a classical CD. The featured pieces include Peter Dayton's *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, Christopher Hallum's *A Day in Monroe County*, and the author's own *Suite for Viola and Piano* and *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola*. As classical music in general is not often self-recorded or self-produced like the majority of more popular musical genres, the author intends this project to encourage more performers to self-produce their own projects as well.

Each of the first four chapters offers insights into the compositional processes of the pieces as well as guides to successful performances of them; the first two chapters also give biographies of the composers, detailing their relationships to the author. The final chapter discusses the recording process, including the microphones and techniques used, as well as the methods used in post-production and mixing, and the challenges faced during the process. The

author hopes this project will make a good case for all of these pieces as viable additions to the standard repertoire, and that more musicians will be inspired to make their own recordings.

INTRODUCTION

The repertoire of an instrument is defined over decades, if not centuries, with many pieces eventually becoming standards that are continually performed and recorded. The standard repertoire for the violin and the cello is extensive, comprising major works by important composers such as Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Schumann, Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, and Barber, among many others. By the Romantic era, even the double bass had enjoyed a vogue, thanks to performers and composers such as Dittersdorf, Dragonetti, and Bottesini. The viola, however, had not quite caught up yet. Despite a few pieces by Telemann, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and a few others, the instrument in general was unjustly overlooked by performers and composers alike. This barely changed until the early twentieth century, when the first major performers of the instrument came along and thus inspired important new compositions. Due to this late growth, much of the standard repertoire is more obscure and not often as accessible to performers and audiences as that of other instruments.

In the twenty-first century, the repertoire of the viola continues to grow, and as both a violist and composer, I believe that it is important to contribute more music of high quality and aesthetic variety to the instrument, not only through my own compositions but also through commissioning and collaborating with other living composers. I chose to record several pieces, including two of my own pieces and two works of colleagues of mine, and write about them as well as their respective composers. The two pieces of mine, *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola, Set I, Opus 13* (2011/2016) and *Suite for Viola and Piano, Opus 5* (2008-09/Revised 2011/2017), are my two most important compositions for the viola; they were mostly written during my undergraduate studies at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music but were either completed or significantly revised at different points during my graduate studies. These

pieces show a significant progression of personal compositional craft and maturity, as well as considerable variety in style and techniques. The other two pieces featured on this recording are *Fantasy for Viola and Piano* (2009) by Peter Dayton and *A Day in Monroe County* (2010) by Christopher Hallum. I commissioned Hallum's piece, which has been rather successful since its premiere; Dayton's piece was not actually written for me, but I have performed it several times and consider it an important part of my repertoire. The most important aspect of this project is the actual recording, as I hope it will make a good case for each of these pieces as viable additions to the viola's standard repertoire.

I also chose to write about the processes of recording and editing, as I did all of this myself. As classical music in general is not often self-recorded or self-produced like the majority of more popular musical genres, I intend this project to function in some ways as a practical guide to the recording and editing process. There is much already written and easily available online about recording technology, so I do not get too detailed into the technical aspects, but rather just talk about the methods I used and why, as well as what challenges or surprises I faced in the process.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters: a chapter on Peter Dayton and his *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, a chapter on Christopher Hallum and his *Day in Monroe County*, two chapters dedicated to the author's *Suite for Viola and Piano* and *Milestone Miniatures*, and a chapter detailing the recording and production methods and the challenges faced during this process. Each of the first four chapters is divided into sections such as composers' biographies, history of the selected composition, a brief descriptive analysis, and a performance guide. The sound recording is currently available only in an online streaming service, but it will eventually be pitched to and hopefully released by Centaur Records on a physical compact disc. I do not

intend to change the world through this project, nor do I expect to, but I do feel very strongly about the importance of making this music more accessible to performers and providing some insight into the realm of classical recording and self-production.

CHAPTER ONE: PETER DAYTON AND THE *FANTASY FOR VIOLA AND PIANO*

1.1 Biography

Cincinnati native Peter “Trey” Dayton (b. 1990) is the first composer featured on this project with his beautiful, colorful *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. Dayton was not a trained musician from an early age, but rather discovered his initial love for classical music through video game soundtracks during middle school; he was strongly influenced through the music of Nobuo Uematsu, who composed the music for the *Final Fantasy* series.¹ At the same time, he was turned on to the Finale Notepad notation software, which, along with piano arrangements of *Final Fantasy* music, allowed him to discover how to read and create his own music.² Though a self-taught pianist, Dayton’s interest in music led him to discover French impressionism; “my interest in piano music introduced me to the music of Debussy, Satie, and Ravel, which then put orchestral music on my radar.”³ By time he graduated high school, Dayton had a passion for the arts: “visual art, music, and poetry. Of these, I felt I had facility in music and poetry, but no formal musical education, so I went to Vanderbilt University planning to pursue writing. I took a music class anyway and, after a new classes, I decided to pursue music instead, finally able to put names and terminology to my own personal discoveries.”⁴

Before Dayton had officially transferred to the Blair School of Music, our mutual friend, Emma Dansak, introduced us. We became good friends pretty quickly and eventually ended up as suitemates a few years later—though we didn’t exactly collaborate very often musically, we shared ideas with each other and often challenged each other on our musical ideals and

¹ Peter Dayton (composer of *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by the author, Questionnaire, March 2017.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

aesthetics; “[o]ver time, we have given each other a lot of feedback on each other’s pieces and general ideas, which has always promoted my own musical growth.”⁵ Below is a picture of Dayton.



Figure 1: Peter Dayton Headshot (sent in an email to the author, March 8, 2017)⁶

Dayton has always been quite prolific, even before becoming an official music student; he notes, “In my first year, technically as a Arts and Sciences student, I had composed a movement for Piano Trio inspired by Joaquin Turina's work, a piece for Piano Quintet, a short setting of an excerpt from *The Wasteland* for Soprano and Piano, and a Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano inspired by a series of Joseph Stella paintings and some of Gershwin's idioms.”⁷ After transferring into Blair in 2009, he began what he considers his “‘official’ corpus of work,”⁸ beginning with his *Fantasy for Viola and Piano* and *Soupir for Violin and String Quartet* (which the author also has performed).⁹ Over the next few years, he wrote many other works for strings, piano, and winds, including his *Waltz-Capriccio for Violin and Piano*, *Trio for Three Violins*,

⁵ Christopher Lowry (author and composer of *Milestone Miniatures* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by Perla Fernández, Questionnaire, March 2017.

⁶ Peter Dayton, email to the author, March 8, 2017.

⁷ Dayton Interview.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lowry Interview.

Epistles for Solo Piano, and *Suite for Flute and Clarinet*, among many others.¹⁰ I have always identified closely with Dayton's musical language: "[f]rom the first moment I heard his music . . . I was struck by the maturity not only of melody and harmony, but particularly of color. There is never a 'pale' moment in his music, unless that's a color he specifically wants from the piece . . ."¹¹

After graduating from Vanderbilt in 2012, Dayton attended the Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University. During his Master's studies, he wrote quite a few major works, including his orchestral work *From Sombre Lands* (an orchestration of his earlier piano piece of the same name) and *Grounds* for string orchestra, both of which were selected in the Ablaze Orchestral Masters Call for Scores and recorded by the Brno Philharmonic for commercial CD release¹² on Ablaze Records ("Orchestral Masters," Volumes 2¹³ and 3¹⁴). Selections of his major choral work, *An American Mass*, were recorded by the First Readings Project for commercial release as well (Ablaze: "New Choral Voices," Volume 1¹⁵ and the soon-to-be-released Volume 2¹⁶). In addition, *From Sombre Lands* also placed second prize in the 2016 Student Orchestral Division of The American Prize, which I placed third prize in for *A Cypress Prelude*.¹⁷ Dayton also has written a *Sonatina for Viola and Violoncello* as well as *2 Pieces for Viola*, both of which I hope to play and record in the future.¹⁸

¹⁰ Peter Dayton, "List of Works," accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.peterdaytonmusic.com/list-of-works>.

¹¹ Lowry Interview

¹² Peter Dayton, "List of Works," accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.peterdaytonmusic.com/list-of-works>.

¹³ *Orchestral Masters, Volume 2*, Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, Mikel Toms, Recorded June 2014, Ablaze Records ar-00017, 2015, 2 compact discs.

¹⁴ *Orchestral Masters, Volume 3*, Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, Mikel Toms, Recorded July 2015, Ablaze Records ar-00026, 2016, 1 compact disc.

¹⁵ *New Choral Voices, Volume 1*, First Readings Project, David Ostenso Moore, Recorded May 2015, Ablaze Records ar-00027, 2016, 1 compact disc.

¹⁶ Peter Dayton: Composer, Pianist. accessed March 1, 2017. <http://www.peterdaytonmusic.com/>.

¹⁷ "Composer Winners: Orchestra," *The American Prize*, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://theamericanprize.blogspot.com/2017/01/composer-winners-orchestra.html>.

¹⁸ Peter Dayton, "List of Works," accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.peterdaytonmusic.com/list-of-works>.

1.2 *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*

Dayton composed his *Fantasy for Viola and Piano* in 2009 after transferring into the Blair School of Music. Despite having written several smaller works during his first year of college, Dayton considers the *Fantasy* to be one of his first serious works. The premiere of the piece took place in November 2009, on the same “Living Sounds” concert as the premiere of the last movement my *Suite for Viola and Piano*. The violist in the performance was Emma Dansak and Dayton was the pianist. I recall being struck by the beauty and color of the piece as well as the intricate harmonies that demonstrated impeccable maturity, especially for the composer’s age.¹⁹

In April 2011, I decided to perform the *Fantasy* in a recital. Prior to the performance, the composer and I worked together to make a few revisions; there were no significant changes to the piece itself, but just some adjustments of articulations, bowings, and dynamics.²⁰ I ended up giving two performances of the piece at Blair, once in my second senior recital on April 25, 2011,²¹ and again on a Thursday afternoon Student Recital on September 29, 2011.²² I told Dayton that I feel a strong affinity for and relationship with the *Fantasy*, to which he replies “I think the affinity is natural. You were only the second or third violist I had ever met, and your performance was the first time I work of mine was given a chance to be heard after its premiere. I think it is that choice, the one to maintain a relationship with a work beyond the bare birthing process that exhibits a performer's ownership of the work.”²³

¹⁹ Lowry Interview

²⁰ Dayton Interview

²¹ Peter Dayton, “Fantasy for Viola and Piano,” Filmed April 2011, YouTube video, 04:33, Posted April 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wnwdl4u9ajA>.

²² Christopher Lowry, “Fantasy for Viola and Piano (Peter Dayton),” Filmed September 2011, YouTube video, 04:42, Posted March 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQaYjUw-SyI>.

²³ Dayton Interview

Besides these performances and my recent performance of it at LSU on February 6, 2017, the piece has enjoyed quite a bit of success, being one of Dayton's most performed works.²⁴ The composer says that "[w]hile the Fantasy has proven (relatively speaking) quite popular, your performance continues to be the definitive one!"²⁵

As the title of the piece implies, the *Fantasy* is rather free in form, but is "quite organized by its clear motivic and thematic ideas."²⁶ Dayton considers the choice to deliberately write a piece that doesn't conform to traditional formal ideals to have been the biggest compositional challenge;

It was a challenge in terms of exploring form outside of formula. At a time when I was still learning the terminology of forms and the different kinds of common practice forms, this was a piece unified by a melodic idea, rather than by the conflict and reconciliation of key areas. Formally, the Viola's melody serves as an *Idée fixe*, unifying the diverse textures and harmonic areas explored in the piece. . . . The descending series of thirds in the piano part is also a significant recurring element. Maybe a better way to consider the form is a kind of ritornello, though I called it a fantasy because it is NOT a preset form.²⁷

Stylistically, the piece is clearly inspired by the composer's interest not only in French music but also in American music;

The opening gesture, which becomes significant in the piano accompaniment, was definitely taken from the final movement of Michael Kurek's (my teacher at the time) Viola Sonata. At the time I seem remember listening to a lot of Bernstein - the piece I had just composed previously, *Soupir*, for Violin and String Quartet, which was inspired by *Agathon* from Bernstein's *Serenade*. Barber's Cello Sonata is probably in there too.²⁸

Interestingly, mentioning Barber, there's an almost direct quote (perhaps unintentional) from the Barber *Violin Concerto*,²⁹ shown below.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Peter Dayton, email to the author, February 9, 2017.

²⁶ Lowry Interview

²⁷ Dayton Interview

²⁸ Dayton Interview

²⁹ Lowry Interview

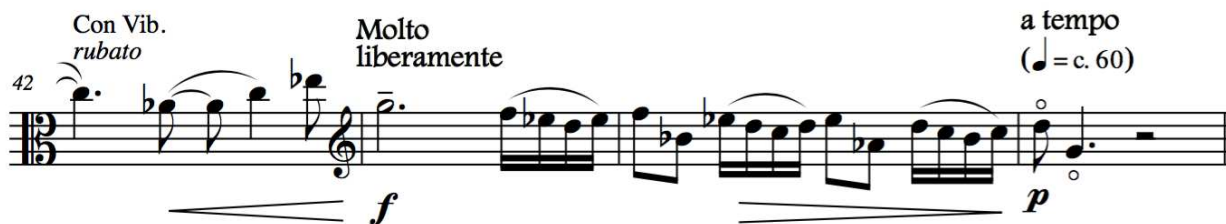


Figure 2: Dayton: *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, mm.42-45, showing melodic influence from Barber's *Violin Concerto*³⁰

The composer also mentions his influence through the visual arts, a theme which has remained a significant attribute of his music, including his *Red Bird Etudes* (after serigraphs by Charley Harper), *Open Air: Four Seasons in Landscapes* by Ivon Hitchens (for oboe and violin), and a series of pieces based on the paintings of Fernando de Szyszlo.³¹ The art influence in the *Fantasy* is less of a driving factor, though; in the composer's words, "The colors of the harmonies in the opening processional piano part were in part inspired by the background colors in a reproduction I owned of Dalí's 'Les Elephants.'"³²

One of the more attractive facets of the piece is the lush harmonies; Dayton says that "Harmony and rich harmonic color has always been important, and especially when I composed the *Fantasy*, the main focus of my exploration was on developing more complex, harmonies."³³ He describes the harmonic language as "extended tertian," consisting primarily of major and minor chords with added ninths and thirteenths.³⁴ The primary melodic material is deceptive, initially giving the impression of quartal writing, but soon begins to move in thirds, emphasizing the tertian nature of the piece.

³⁰ Peter Dayton. *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. Peter Dayton Music (ASCAP): 2009.

³¹ Peter Dayton, "List of Works," accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.peterdaytonmusic.com/list-of-works>.

³² Dayton Interview

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Dayton Interview



Figure 3: Peter Dayton *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, mm. 1-6, showing the main thematic material as well as the moving thirds in the piano part.³⁵

The tertian idiom gives the impression of tonality, but it also allows constant harmonic shifts that make it nigh impossible to define what key the piece is in most of time. This “pantonality” is proof of Dayton’s strong interest in French impressionism—“the harmonies are very much out of Ravel’s music.”³⁶ The 3/8 section starting at measure 12 provides some of the most interesting harmonies in the piano part; the composer states, “I remember the 3/8 section was a particular step for me in exploring denser harmonies: the mixed 3rd and altered extensions.”³⁷

When asked what he considers to be the most important feature of the piece, Dayton assures that the primary melodic motive in the viola is most important and complex harmonic development is also quite integral; beyond this, “[c]olor is written into the line itself as an extension of the instrument’s range. Writing a low note on the viola means a throaty color. This

³⁵ Peter Dayton. *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. Peter Dayton Music (ASCAP): 2009.

³⁶ Dayton Interview

³⁷ Ibid.

could be said to be a development in my own growth away from keyboardistic composition and towards thinking of the instrument's timbre itself.”³⁸

1.3 Performance Guide

Playing this piece is a treat for any violist looking for repertoire that is colorful and imaginative while still being accessible to a wide range of playing levels. Both the viola and piano parts are well written and thoughtfully conceived for the instruments, and therefore there are no significant challenges in either part. When asked about the process of writing idiomatically in this piece, Dayton responded: “To be fair, apart from a limited number of multi-stops, the viola's part is a single-line with few complicated rhythms and only one high-ranged moment. The function of the viola in this work is as a lyrical instrument, so there is little technical challenge. It is an involved piano part, but it fit within my own skill level as a self-taught pianist.”³⁹

There are a number of small challenges in the piece to be aware of. For instance, the opening thematic motive in the viola—this provided an unexpected challenge for myself in terms of playing consistently in tune and also having a consistent vibrato that carried through the downbeat of the next measure. Special care should be taken to either add just a touch of vibrato that stays consistent through the figure or to play it entirely *senza vibrato* until the piano enters in the next measure. For some reason, due to the stretch from the low C-sharp in half position to the F-sharp, the fingerings 1-3 and 1-4 both feel awkward, as the former feels too wide and the latter feels too narrow; either one technically works, and I chose to use the third finger in order to use vibrato more confidently and consistently. I prefer most of the first phrase (beginning from the fourth beat of measure 3) to be played in third and fourth positions, avoiding the brighter timbre

³⁸ Dayton Interview

³⁹ Ibid.

of first position; however, the *Maestoso* section in measures ten and eleven benefits from the more open tone of the lower positions.

For the following *Allegretto triste* section, though it is marked *molto espressivo*, I prefer to hold back the expressivity at first and let it grow with the contour of the phrase, blooming fully at measure 28; this is another section that benefits from the deeper sonorities of playing in a higher position, as long as the violist does not have an overpowering wolf tone on the F in measure 23. The two measures of *Poco più lento* (mm.32-33) are written identically for the viola but with different chords in the piano part. I like to imply an echo effect in the second measure with a different fingering, shown below.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for measures 32 and 33 of Peter Dayton's *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. The top system is for the viola, marked 'Poco più lento' in 4/4 time. It shows two measures of a descending eighth-note scale. The first measure has a fingering of 1 3 2 1, and the second measure has a fingering of 1 2-3 2. The bottom system is for the piano, also marked 'Poco più lento' in 4/4 time. It shows two measures of chords. The first measure is marked 'subito p' and the second measure is marked 'p'.

Figure 4: Dayton *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, mm.32-33 (Fingerings added by the author)⁴⁰

The darker harmonies of the section starting of measure 40 can be enhanced by playing either completely without vibrato or with just a slight amount; of course, the composer specifies in measure 42 to play with vibrato, but I save my widest, most romantic vibrato for the improvisational climax of the phrase in the next measure, choosing instead to increase the

⁴⁰ Peter Dayton. *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. Peter Dayton Music (ASCAP): 2009.

intensity of the vibrato along with a crescendo into the *forte*. The two G's in the next measures are marked with the instruction "like a sob," which I achieve through stopping the note with my second finger on the C string as indicated and letting the open G ring with it; I also use a wide vibrato that I keep going even after I have stopped the bow in order to let the sympathetic vibrations continue to "sob" as well.

Perhaps the most difficult section to balance is the section from measures 52 through 62. The nature of the pedaled arpeggios in the piano is that it will ring loudly no matter what, and rather than the pianist trying to tone this down, the violist should compensate by using a very compact bow speed, opting instead to use more pressure as close to the bridge as possible while still maintaining a warm, open tone. Starting at the *molto* crescendo in measure 58, the violist should make every note change slightly accented and should use a more intense, fast vibrato in order to effectively lead into this *fortissimo*.

The small viola cadenza that follows this section allows the violist to open up fully on the C string—I usually ignore the *mezzoforte* marking in favor of a full *forte*, but then I drop in dynamic in the pickup to measure 64 and imply a crescendo for the next three beats until it's actually marked. This following string crossing section gives the violist many different options in terms of drama and pacing; I suggest pulling back the tempo slightly on the first group and begin accelerating immediately until the final group, where the violist should *ritard* into the downbeat of measure 66, which is the climax of the piece. For all of these string crossing groups, the violist should emphasize the open C more than the top notes even through the crescendo to avoid accidentally rearticulating the top notes thereby converting the sextuplets into septuplets like the final group; this accidental rearticulation is almost unavoidable (something I learned the hard way through the recording process) but is worth noting.

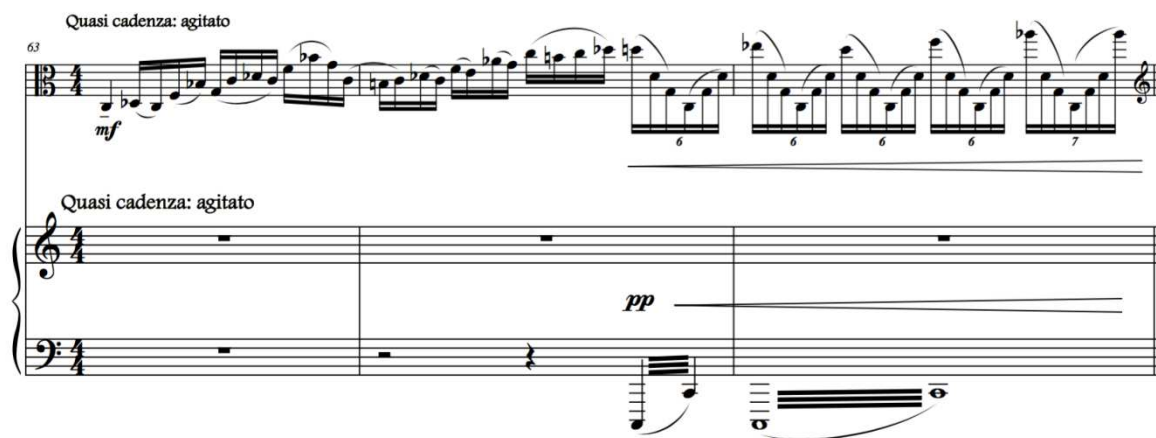


Figure 5: Dayton *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, mm.63-65, showing the cadenza and string crossings.⁴¹

The lead-in to the climax is the only moment that utilizes the higher tessitura of the instrument, with the climax itself announced by the high C of the viola. Achieving this note is not difficult, but the performer has the option of either playing the preceding A-flat with the third finger and essentially sliding into the C with 3 as well or changing to first finger for the A-flat in the middle of the arpeggiation and already being in position for the C. Both approaches have their advantages and risks; the 3-3 shift allows for an expressive *portamento* into the C but also compromises the accuracy of the shift, whereas the earlier shift is safer for intonation but can sound too musically square. I used both approaches for different takes while recording, and I ended up using a take with the latter method, but either one can work.

The ending comprises melodies in the piano with sustained harmonic G's in the viola part, one played as a half-harmonic on the G string and the second as a harmonic fingered a fifth above the open C string (sounding the same pitch). The composer puts in a suggested bowing, starting the first harmonic up bow and the last one down; but, in order to sustain these effectively, I recommend starting the first harmonic down bow and concealing a bow change in the middle of this note and then playing the last note down bow and *sotto voce*, allowing the

⁴¹ Peter Dayton. *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. Peter Dayton Music (ASCAP): 2009.

sound to fade out naturally by the time the tip of the bow is reached. This will allow a more natural sustain and decay of dynamics as well as providing a more natural connection between the notes without feeling stuck at the frog of the bow before the last note.

Perhaps the biggest overall challenge in this piece is in interpretation; though not very technically demanding, it takes a violist with a great sense of imagination and expression to bring out the full potential. The violist and pianist both should work together closely to ensure all dynamic changes are carefully balanced and that every section has its own unique color. I strongly believe this piece will become a part of the viola repertoire, partly due to the high quality of the piece itself, but also due to the accessibility to both performer and audience. The composer considers

one of the selling points of the piece to be that it presents no particular impediments to a good performance. Within academic circles, the idea of perpetual challenge is incredibly popular. This, however, undercuts one of the most significant functions of classical music throughout its history, consumption by various audiences. The point of this piece is not to challenge adversarially, it is to provide an aesthetic space for contemplation and enjoyment.⁴²

⁴² Dayton Interview

CHAPTER TWO: CHRISTOPHER HALLUM AND *A DAY IN MONROE COUNTY*

2.1 Biography

Nashville native Christopher Hallum was born in 1985. His musical education started at the age of eight when he began taking piano lessons; he continued lessons on and off through most of high school and some of college. Hallum, pictured below, attributes his musical gifts to his good ear: “From the beginning of my musical upbringing, my ear was always much stronger than my ability to read music. Honestly, I mostly faked my ability to read music until much later, in early high school, if I remember correctly. Because of my strong ear, I was drawn to writing little ditties, and started recording my own music in high school.”⁴³



Figure 6: Christopher Hallum Headshot.⁴⁴

It was around this time when I met Hallum—we went to Belmont Church together and often played on the praise band together, with Hallum on keyboards and myself usually on percussion or strings.⁴⁵ We became good friends and regularly collaborated together in this capacity. It seems like we both started seriously composing right around the same time, and “I

⁴³ Christopher Hallum (composer of *A Day in Monroe County*), interviewed by Christopher Lowry, Questionnaire, March 2017.

⁴⁴ Chris Hallum. <http://www.cdhallum.com/>.

⁴⁵ Christopher Lowry (author and composer of *Milestone Miniatures* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by Perla Fernández, Questionnaire, March 2017.

remember he came to hear the premiere of *Celebration Overture* by the Curb Youth Symphony in December 2006, and he might have been there for the MTSU Symphony Orchestra's performance of it that following April, though I can't remember for sure."⁴⁶

Hallum attended college at Middle Tennessee State University, where he started in 2004 as a Recording Industry Management major, his interest and experience in recording being his primary inspiration. However, he states that the curriculum was focused less on making music and more on the business aspect.⁴⁷ At this time, he decided to add a music minor;

As I began to prepare for my music minor audition, I took up jazz piano lessons with Bruce Dudley who, at the time, taught jazz piano at MTSU. I also took a theory placement exam to determine whether I could start taking the major-level music theory sequence, and while I did reasonably well on the exam, I didn't quite place highly enough to start in Theory I, so I took the Elements of Music course. This ended up being an excellent situation for me, since I really needed a refresher on the basics. I devoured the material, and loved learning the mechanics of music, which I had for so long ignored or dismissed as unimportant. I continued on into Theory I and II, and after a year and a half in college, decided to switch my major to Intended Bachelor of Music with a concentration in Theory and Composition. This was one of the best decisions I have ever made, and have never regretted it; I felt as though I had entered a world where my desire to create music could really be nurtured.⁴⁸

After completing his Bachelor's Degree in 2009, he attended the University of Texas at Austin for his Master's Degree, which he completed in 2012. For a few years, Hallum taught private piano and composition lessons at the Armstrong Community Music School in Austin while also working as a freelance composer and engraver;⁴⁹ until recently, he also served as the Journal Editor for the American Viola Society. Following this, Hallum moved to Atlanta for his current job as Undergraduate Music Admissions and Recruiting Officer at the University of Georgia's Hugh Hodgson School of Music.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Hallum Interview.

⁴⁸ Hallum Interview.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

2.2 *A Day in Monroe County*

When I first heard that Hallum had switched into the composition department, I was skeptical, given my knowledge of him only outside of the classical genre and as someone who does not read music. However, “[w]hatever skepticism I might have harbored was quickly shattered when I heard a few recordings of his works. I was impressed by his melodic gift as well as a sort of lyrical ‘post-Ivesian’ Americana feeling. It didn’t take me long to realize I needed to play something of his.”⁵⁰ Soon after, I commissioned him to write me a piece for a recital.

Hallum’s output while studying with Paul Osterfield during undergrad consisted of many varied smaller works, but he says that

there are two pieces from my undergraduate years that, in terms of style, really paved the way for *A Day in Monroe County*. The first is a quartet for violin, viola, horn, and piano, titled *Meditation on a Hymn Tune by W. H. Sims*, which is based on a hymn tune, *Charles*, composed by my great grandfather Walter Hines Sims. The second piece is *A Series of Thoughts and Images* for clarinet and piano. Both of these works fall into the same sort of Americana or pandiatonic style as that of *A Day in Monroe County*.⁵¹

He wrote *Monroe County* while studying with Donald Grantham, who also tends to write in an Americana idiom. Hallum cites this as well as Shostakovich’s *Sonata for Viola and Piano* as being influences on the development of this piece.⁵² The piece reflects on Hallum’s childhood memories; according to his program notes,

Monroe County is in South Alabama, and its largest city is Monroeville. Monroeville is where I travelled almost every year for family reunions as a child. It is also where author Harper Lee grew up. Interestingly, although I did read Lee’s novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I think it was more specifically my exposure to the 1962 film adaptation of the book that most strongly influenced my childhood memories of Monroeville.⁵³

⁵⁰ Lowry Interview.

⁵¹ Hallum Interview

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

The general harmonic language is pandiatonic, though Hallum admits “to be honest, I wasn’t thinking much about harmonic language while I was writing it. It was composed in a sort of stream of consciousness way, and is meant to take the listener through various short scenes, as though they are being recalled after the fact.”⁵⁴ This also applies to the form, which, just like Dayton’s piece, is a sort of fantasy. When asked what the most important aspects of the piece are, Hallum comments that “one of the most striking features of the work is its opening, which is meant to give the sense of floating out of time without much sense of forward motion. The bitonality of the opening also lends to its dreamlike other-worldly sound.”⁵⁵

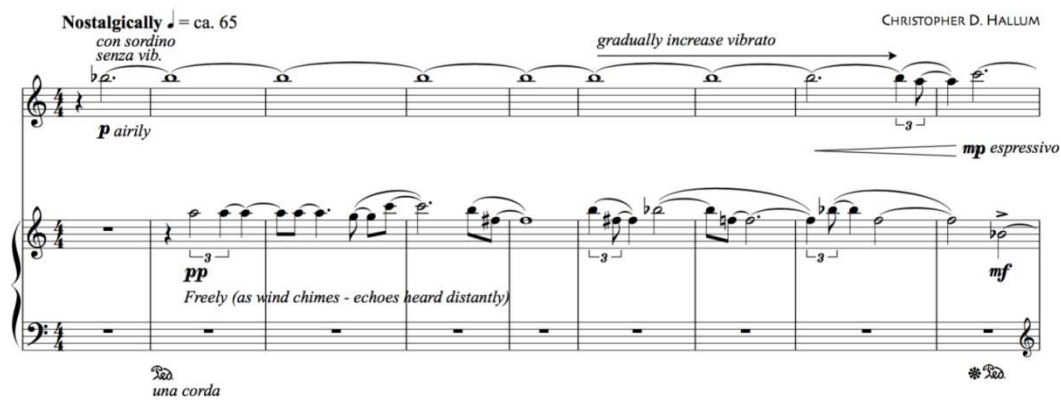


Figure 7: Hallum, *A Day in Monroe County*, mm.1-9, showing the bitonality of the opening.⁵⁶ He also mentions the general calm nature of the piece: “[the] most salient overall feature of the work is how quiet it is. There are louder moments, yes, but to really be played well, both performers must not get too carried away with louder dynamics.”⁵⁷

I gave the premiere performance of this piece on my senior recital at Blair on February 11, 2011, along with pianist Valerie Hsu.⁵⁸ The piece has received several performances since

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Hallum Interview.

⁵⁶ Hallum, Christopher. *A Day in Monroe County*. Buddy or Melvin (ASCAP): 2010.

⁵⁷ Hallum Interview.

⁵⁸ Christopher Lowry, “Hallum: A Day in Monroe County, for Viola and Piano,” Filmed February 2011. YouTube video, 07:17. Posted February 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OelQXfqO7xw>.

then, including a few in Texas and Indiana,⁵⁹ and then my recent performance in Louisiana with Daniel Liebeskind on February 6, 2017.

2.3 Performance Guide

Just like the Dayton piece, this piece is very well-suited to both instruments. The viola overall feels very natural to play; there are a few more challenges in this piece than in the previous, but everything is manageable. Actually, one of the biggest difficulties is the very beginning of the piece—the viola starts quietly by itself on a high B-flat, muted, and *senza vibrato*. The piano enters with very soft chiming tones in the next measure, but the viola sustains this B-flat for several measures, adding vibrato in measure 6, and then eventually increasing in volume until a change of note in the pickup to measure 9. After a brief escape tone A, the viola part rests on a high C for a few measures. This static and stoical writing is actually quite difficult to pull off effectively, and special care should be taken to ensure that the tone never gets too focused in this section. From the beginning, the composer marks the part with the indication “airily,” and my suggestion for this is to play with very little weight and a lot of bow speed—stagger the bowing, of course, rather than actually plan bow changes—in order to allow this airy tone to project to the back of the hall. I also would recommend experimenting with different types of mutes to find a tone that emphasizes this quality but also allows for more projection in the next section. The mute I chose for this piece is the Alpine Mute Company’s “Artist Mute,” which is modeled after the original Menuhin Shield mute,⁶⁰ but without the brass disc in the center. I found the tone of this mute to be fairly direct and not as warm as some heavier mutes, but with still enough darkness to the tone to provide a nice contrast to the normal viola tone.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Hallum Interview

⁶⁰ alpine

⁶¹ My interview



Figure 8; Alpine Mute Co. Mutes, From L to R: "Professional," "Professional," "Artist," and "White Professional" (modeled directly after the original Menuhin Shield)⁶²

Another recommendation for the entire opening section is to write in all the piano cues into the viola part; the cues for the first 8 measures are already included, but I found myself writing in rhythmic cues up until measure 20 in order to avoid getting lost.

The following section finally opens up with a viola melody, marked “molto espressivo.” I choose to be more expressive with the use of bow pressure and speed rather than with too intense of a vibrato, as the dynamic range (*mezzoforte* to *mezzopiano*) does not call for an impassioned vibrato. The written bowings here are more phrase markings than actual bowings, and I choose to break many of them up to better fit the contour of the phrases. When I first performed the piece, I strived for a more open sound and played most of everything in first position, using the open A string quite liberally; now, I favor a more reserved sound, with most of the passage in either second or third position. The high-range passage in measure 33 will be difficult to project effectively if the mute used is too heavy, and following this, there is essentially only four beats in which to take the mute off, which also might limit which kind the player can use.

The next section provides one of the most unexpected challenges of the piece: counting! Seemingly very simple, this section switches between 3/4 and 5/8 times, and there is no real pattern to when it changes. Even after having performed and recorded the piece, I still have to subdivide quite carefully to ensure I change notes at the right time. I actually recommend

⁶² Alpine Mute Co.

approaching this passage very robotically rather than expressively, as I feel the idea of *ostinato* and pseudo-minimalism is integral to this passage. The violist should focus the weight of the bow more on the A string than on the D in order to bring out the moving melodic line. The *glissandi* should be emphasized almost in a fiddle style to bring out more of the Americana sound of the piece. The lead in to the next section is the first place where I use the aforementioned “impassioned” vibrato, but this quickly fades into the next transitional section.



Figure 9: Hallum, *A Day in Monroe County*, mm.39-46, showing the meter changes and “fiddle-esque” writing.⁶³

The use of open strings here is actually deceptively tricky, due partly to the syncopations and partly to gradual increase in dynamics, which changes the physics of the string crossings. Articulating each change of string cleanly is key, but not at the expense of the smoothness of the line. However, the climax of the piece at rehearsal figure D (measure 69) leaves a little more room for more accented articulation of these string crossings. At *fortissimo*, it’s almost impossible to make these string crossings speak evenly without a bit of extra “bite” on the front of each note. I advise changing the written bowing from two-to-a-bow to three-to-a-bow in order to keep the pattern the same in each measure and always ensure a strong emphasis on the downbeats. Despite the dynamic level, the piano has the melody here, and all of the open string

⁶³ Hallum, *A Day in Monroe County*.

notes are doubled in the left hand of the piano as well; as the intensity of the sound is important, I suggest for the violist to keep the dynamic level up and to turn in towards the piano slightly so that the sound from the F-holes is not too overbearing to the audience.

Figure 10: Hallum, *A Day in Monroe County*, mm.67-72, showing use of open strings at the climax.⁶⁴

The climax winds down with a *decrescendo* and *ritardando* to a fermata, with the viola sustaining a harmonic A. I play this A up high on the D string and then switch to the A string when the note is rearticulated at the end of measure 97. Here Hallum writes to “gradually increase vibrato,” and I achieve this effect by starting the note as a harmonic and gradually stopping it along with the addition of vibrato. There are many options for fingerings in this next section, but I often choose whatever is most expressive within musical reason—most of it stays in third position with a few shifts to first and a few shifts higher as well. The player should not be afraid to use tasteful *portamento* in some of these shifts; however, special care should be taken to ensure that these *portamenti* sound different than the written *glissandi*. I recommend using a liberal amount of bow speed on the final harmonic of the piece, even though it will mean having to change bow many times; since this is meant to reflect the opening gestures of the

⁶⁴ Hallum, *A Day in Monroe County*.

piece, it's important that the sustained note does not waver too much in volume, and using too slow of a bow speed can cause this harmonic to intermittently start and stop speaking.

Just like with Dayton's *Fantasy*, *Monroe County* is not very difficult on a technical level, but the overall musical effect will be easily lost in the hands of an unimaginative player. It's important to let the piece flow; according to the composer:

I think one of the challenges with a good number of my pieces is striking a balance between letting the piece breathe (resisting the temptation to go too quickly through certain sections), and, especially during moments where there is repetitive material, not getting too lulled into a pattern to the point where bars are miscounted. There is not quite as much of this with *Monroe County*; however, though the piece looks fairly simple at first glance, it's not as sight-readable as it may seem, and a good performance requires focused preparation and collaboration between both violist and pianist.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Hallum Interview.

CHAPTER THREE: LOWRY'S *SUITE FOR VIOLA AND PIANO*

3.1 History of the Piece

Prior to college, I had no formal training in composition; my only “training” was in regards to orchestration, which I had gleaned from reading orchestration manuals, studying scores of late Romantic pieces, and observing what other instruments and sections were playing in youth orchestra. By the time I had started high school, I had decided I wanted to write a symphony, which was ambitious for multiple reasons, least of all because the only original piece I had written was a short piano piece when I was six years old (aside from this, all I had done was write variations on Pachelbel’s *Canon in D*). Nevertheless, by my senior year of high school, I had finished what I considered at the time an excerpt of the first movement of my symphony—this would later be known as *Celebration Overture*. Carol Nies, the director of the Curb Youth Symphony, was so taken with the piece that she programmed it for our December 2006 concert and later for performances with the Middle Tennessee State University Symphony Orchestra and even with the Nashville Symphony. That December concert was my first world premiere. Shortly following this, I wrote *Love Poem for Viola and Harp* and *Tranquillo* for mixed chamber ensemble, as well as some additional excerpts from my symphony, but that was basically it until college.

My freshman year of college, I took an Intro to Composition course, but no private lessons. During this year, I wrote what was originally the third movement of my symphony but is now called *Symphonic Dance and Dirge*, a thirteen-minute piece for large orchestra. My sophomore year, I finally began taking private composition lessons. My *Suite for Viola and Piano* was the first piece I began writing during lessons, though it took me three semesters to complete the full piece;

The *Suite* is a piece that I still look upon as a particular triumph for several reasons: it was the first large-scale multi-movement piece I actually completed (I had of course been working on and off for years on my Symphony, but even now it remains unfinished), it was the first piece that I had written for composition lessons, and it was the first piece in which I truly attempted to go beyond my level of comfort and understanding tonally and harmonically.⁶⁶

I remember walking into my first lesson with Michael Kurek feeling very nervous—somehow, I knew that what I had been writing was good on a certain level, but I still felt very unsure of myself since I was not trained at all. Kurek, who primarily works in a sort of Neo-Romantic idiom, was the perfect first teacher for me,

as I needed confidence to understand that I could actually be a composer; I think if I had been challenged too much to write outside of my normal style at that point, it would have scared me off from continuing to compose. In my first lesson, Dr. Kurek basically told me that there was no real wrong way to approach the composition process and encouraged me to write in whatever way I was comfortable with.⁶⁷

I wrote the first and second movements of the *Suite* with Kurek, the third movement with Michael Slayton the next semester, the fourth movement that summer, and the final movement with Michael Alec Rose in the fall of 2009. The poetic titles of the movements do not derive from anything in particular, but rather they serve to set the tone for each of the movements, all of which are meant to represent dreams.

The first movement composition process was interesting—the initial motivic ideas for the piece did not even make it into the final version of the piece;

the original opening piano gestures were taken out to be used for a double bass piece (which still hasn't actually been written yet!); the final opening piano gestures were added much later in an effort to motivically set up the fortissimo version of that gesture later in the piece. The harmonic language of this movement is modal and the general style is pastoral. I don't recall what exact pieces I had been listening to at the time, but I know I was heavily influenced by Vaughan

⁶⁶ Christopher Lowry (author and composer of *Milestone Miniatures* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by Perla Fernández, Questionnaire, March 2017.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Williams's music. It was pretty close to the end of the composition process that I gave the movement its title, "...veiled countryside."⁶⁸

It took me about a month to finish this movement before moving on the second movement, which was a much bigger challenge to write, especially the piano part—I have made constant revisions to the piece and in some ways, I think I considered the movement unfinished until this semester, when I finally edited it in a way I was happy with.

The next movement I started eventually became the fourth; I had just started studying with Michael Slayton, who was the first person to challenge me to think outside the realm of functional harmony and Western tonality. At the time, I struggled so much with writing the piece, that he recommended I work on something else;

I was planning a "nightmare" movement, and I wanted it to start tonal and become progressively more and more edgy as it progressed. At the time, however, my compositional tools were fairly limited, and this proved to be difficult. This was Spring 2009, and I was studying with Michael Slayton, who basically assigned me to write a short, undeveloped non-tonal piece for viola and piano. Somehow, even without the experience writing non-tonally, I turned out what would become the third movement, "...endless night," in less than two days.⁶⁹

I hoped to finish the fourth movement following this, but I had just been commissioned by virtuoso percussionist (and fellow LSU alumnus) Christopher Norton and his wife Leslie (principal horn of the Nashville Symphony) to compose a duo for them; I worked on this piece with Slayton, and it became one of my most important experiments outside of usual tonal writing, despite not being a very successful piece. All of sudden I felt I had the tools to write less tonally and harmonically. It was that summer that I finally finished the fourth movement of the *Suite*, which in many ways I consider to be the best movement in terms of craft and compositional adventurousness.

⁶⁸ Lowry Interview.

⁶⁹ Lowry Interview.

I originally planned the last movement to be simple, short, and quieted, but this plan changed pretty quickly. I began this movement while studying with Michael Rose, who completely transformed the way I thought about music in ways I can't even describe; his brilliance as both a composer and teacher, as well as his impassioned style of teaching, allowed me to write what I consider to be the most emotionally mature and honest piece I had ever written to that point. The outer sections of the piece maintained the sense of stasis and calm that I originally intended, but the middle section developed into something much more in touch with the depression I was dealing with that semester. To this date, this movement is a piece that still resonates profoundly with me.

One of the interesting memories I have is being in the audience for the premiere of the first movement of the *Suite* rather than not performing it myself;

Before I had even finished the original version of it, I had decided I wanted to actually listen to a performance of it just to see how someone else would approach playing it. The first performance (November 12, 2008) was in a Blair Composers Forum concert, and it was premiered by my colleagues Jim Larson on viola and Dean Whiteside on piano. They did a great job with it, and it helped me understand better how to notate certain articulations and tempos based on what I hear in my head.⁷⁰

For my sophomore recital on March 14, 2009, I gave the second performance of the first movement⁷¹ and premiered the second movement in their original versions (both movements been significantly revised and extended) along with pianist Polly Brecht.⁷² Jennifer McGuire and I premiered the fifth movement on November 9, 2009, at a Blair Living Sounds Concert.⁷³ I remember playing the first and third in a few competitions, but I never performed the fourth until

⁷⁰ Lowry Interview.

⁷¹ Christopher Lowry, "Suite for Viola and Piano: I. '...veiled countryside' (Original Version)," Filmed March 2009, YouTube video, 06:12, Posted June 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPKXBWuWr0o>.

⁷² Lowry Interview.

⁷³ Christopher Lowry, "Suite for Viola and Piano: V. '...peace transcendent' (Premiere)," Filmed November 2009, YouTube video, 12:19, Posted June 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJl059zKc8w>.

my senior composition recital on November 11, 2011, when I premiered the full piece. Before this, I had touched up the piece and simplified the piano part “in attempt to make it more accessible, but to no avail. The performance on my recital was such a disaster, I actually considered withdrawing the piece completely, as I could not simplify the piano part any further without sacrificing the actual musical content.”⁷⁴

The difficulty of piano part was not the only aspect of the piece I had revised:

The other revisions included small piano interludes in both the first and second movements and some cleaned up articulation notation. Before this recording project, I revisited everything just to make sure I had it as clean and idiomatic as possible; aside from that, I didn’t change much (other than adding a piano pedal resonance section to a viola cadenza in the fifth movement). Luckily, I picked a great pianist (Zih Yun Lin) for this project who actually took it seriously and practiced it very hard. I’m so happy with how the recording turned out . . .”⁷⁵

3.2 First Movement: “...veiled countryside”

This movement “is meant to depict a dream of one's homeland. Inspired greatly by the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ernest Bloch, the pastoral and ethereal nature of the piece helps to illustrate this idea.”⁷⁶ Indeed, the pastoral quality of this movement is unrelenting; though there is some obvious Americana influence, the primary inspiration is English music. Though based quite often on open fourths and fifths, the harmonic language is neither quartal nor quintal—in fact, it is modal, primarily in G Dorian. Instead the perfect intervals serve more as motives; “[t]he open fourths and fifths are not only motivic to this movement, but they also somehow tie the entire suite together.”⁷⁷ The other main idea is the thematic material: “a lush,

⁷⁴ Lowry Interview.

⁷⁵ Lowry Interview.

⁷⁶ Christopher Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano, Opus 5*, Christopher Lowry Music (ASCAP): 2008-09 (Revised 2011/2017).

⁷⁷ Lowry Interview.

lyrical melody reminiscent of an English folk tune. These two ideas work together, forming a picture of a bucolic landscape enshrouded by mist.”⁷⁸

The viola’s primary function in this movement is as a lyrical single-line voice, with a few homophonic double stops. The piano part is primarily in block chords with some occasional simple counterpoint and one more florid section before the climax. In general the two parts work together, but there are two small cadenza-like sections for the viola. Formally, the piece is conceived more as a continually-developing fantasia, but it could loosely be identified in ternary form.

3.3 Second Movement: “...unencumbered youth”

My first experiment in Rondo form, the second movement depicts “a flashback of one’s childhood.”⁷⁹ This movement presents the violist with the unique challenge of playing fast pizzicato melodies effectively and musically. Melodically, the main theme of the piece is in C Lydian, which “aims to emphasize the playfulness and youthfulness already set up by the jaunty rhythms and use of pizzicato.”⁸⁰ In the program notes, I describe the harmonic language as “an accidental echo of Korngold,”⁸¹ which is a reference to how closely and unintentionally the main theme resembles the melody to the third movement of Korngold’s *Violin Concerto*; “though I had definitely heard the Korngold before, it had been many years prior, therefore making this completely coincidental. In fact, I didn’t even realize this until Ben Hart pointed it out to me a few years later!”⁸²

⁷⁸ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁷⁹ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁸⁰ Lowry Interview.

⁸¹ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁸² Lowry Interview.



Figure 11: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, II. "...unencumbered youth," mm.1-13⁸³

The B section modulates to the key of E but remains largely in the same style (just in the Ionian mode instead). The piano interlude that transitions into the C section is not original but was added years later as an attempt to combine the main theme with the “C theme,” which is light and carefree but in duple meter rather than triple. The style, the effects, “as well as sudden meter and key changes represent the carefree nature of childhood. Though generally light and spry in feel, the piece builds in energy towards the end, signifying a child dancing around with wild abandon.”⁸⁴

3.4 Third Movement: “...endless night”

“The first of two nightmares, the third movement is a short, relatively undeveloped adagio. As the title, ‘...endless night,’ suggests, the tone of the piece is dark and mysterious.”⁸⁵

The opening viola cadenza, played entirely on the C string, sets up the main thematic material, which “is loosely based on the opening motives of the first movement of Shostakovich’s *Symphony No. 5*, and the harmonic material, perhaps better described as pan-tonal, was somehow

⁸³ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁸⁴ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

inspired by Paul Hindemith, though not really grounded in his techniques or theory.”⁸⁶ Formally, there is not much to say about the movement, as it has one thematic motive with very little development.

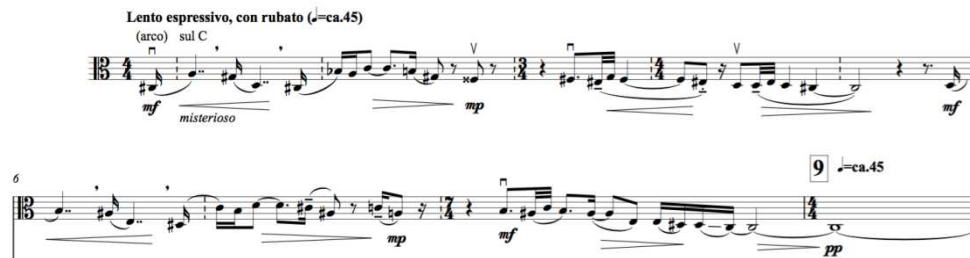


Figure 12: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, III. "...endless night," mm.1-9⁸⁷

The end of the movement features an optional *scordatura* part, in this case a “drop-tuning” of the C string to a B. Though the movement “begins with a strong statement . . . [it] ends fading into the distance, with the piano playing soft planing chords *una corda* and the violist bowing the tailpiece, creating a sound not unlike that of someone groaning.”⁸⁸

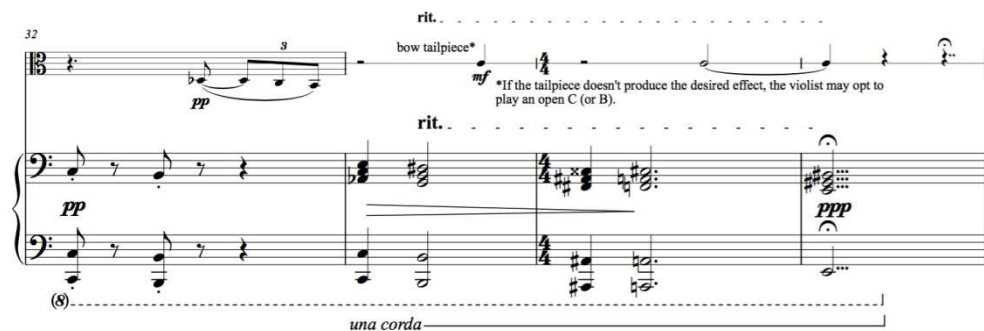


Figure 13: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, III. "...endless night," mm.32-35⁸⁹

3.5 Fourth Movement: “...into a shadow”

The ternary fourth movement “begins with the dreamer lying awake in bed, bombarded by thoughts and worries, and then slipping into a deep sleep, in which occurs the second of two

⁸⁶ Lowry Interview.

⁸⁷ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁸⁸ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

nightmares.”⁹⁰ The piece “is meant to sound more traditional at first, more dissonant in the middle, and then like a less tonal version of the A section at the end—this was supposed to signify someone trying to fall asleep, having a bad nightmare, and waking up from the nightmare so shaken up that he or she cannot fall back asleep.”⁹¹

The main theme, introduced first by unaccompanied viola and then echoed by the piano, has a pompous air to it. The theme itself is in F Dorian, giving off a sense of Celtic inspiration; according to my program notes, “[t]he music leading up to the dream has an almost ‘folk-like’ feel, akin to an Irish fiddle tune, but with Baroque-style chording and counterpoint; it continues at an almost constant ostinato, symbolizing the monotony of the dreamer’s jumbled thoughts.”⁹²



Figure 14: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, IV. "...into a shadow," mm.1-6, main theme.⁹³ The way I always describe the A section is “Irish Baroque,” if that makes sense. It’s almost conceived in a somewhat small-scale ritornello form.”⁹⁴

The B section, the “nightmare,” contrasts the third movement in style, in that this movement “is more restless, paranoid, and almost aggressive in feel.”⁹⁵ Harmonically, this section is rather edgy,

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Lowry Interview.

⁹² Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁹³ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁹⁴ Lowry Interview.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

primarily in a sort of C minor pandiatonicism, with liberal use of tritones to add tension and drama to the soundscape. The *sul ponticello* and bowing with the metal coil of the bow also serve to emphasize this tension. The middle section ends with a series of downward glissandi in the viola part (accompanied by a somewhat masked quote from Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis*) ending in a loud cluster followed by a grand pause (like the infamous dream of falling down and waking up right before you hit the ground).⁹⁶



Figure 15: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, IV. "...into a shadow," mm.29-38, showing the highly contrapuntal nature of the piece.⁹⁷

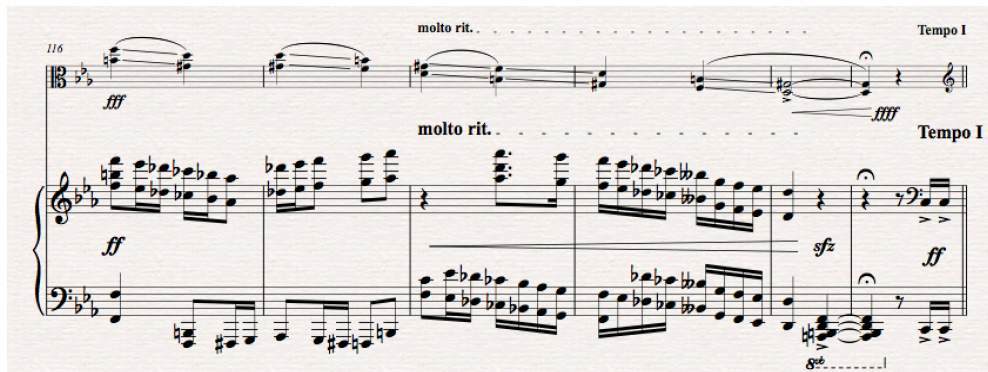


Figure 16: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, IV. "...into a shadow," mm.116-121, the "falling scene."⁹⁸

The return of the A section starts much more nervously than the beginning of the piece; "the melody undergoes intervallic diminution and augmentation before finally returning to the

⁹⁶ Lowry Interview.

⁹⁷ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

⁹⁸ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

modal idiom from before.”⁹⁹ The piece briefly alludes to another nightmare, but the piece “awakens” again, more frenzied and frustrated than ever before.



Figure 17: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, IV. "...into a shadow," mm.122-28, showing intervallic diminution and augmentation of the main theme.¹⁰⁰

3.6 Fifth Movement: "...peace transcendent"

Even if the fourth movement is the best crafted of the five, I still related more to the fifth movement. According to my program notes, the last movement represents

a dream of calm after the storm. Having just battled two nightmares, the dreamer is overcome by a feeling of overwhelming peace that transcends all troubles and fears. This tranquility is depicted through a sort of harmonic stasis, quite similar to the Vaughan Williams-esque atmosphere created in the first movement, but also owing much to Maurice Ravel and Aaron Copland.¹⁰¹

The idea of musical stasis was something very attractive to me when I wrote this piece, and it is achieved effectively at the beginning with the gentle chiming piano part and the harmonic glissando in the viola. After the mostly pentatonic introduction, the main theme is stated, “which is a very obvious (though, again, unintentional) reflection of the Rebecca Clarke *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, which I was studying at the time. This unabashedly American pastoral scene is interrupted briefly by a viola cadenza, colored by the sympathetic ringing of the piano strings.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Lowry Interview.

¹⁰⁰ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Lowry Interview.

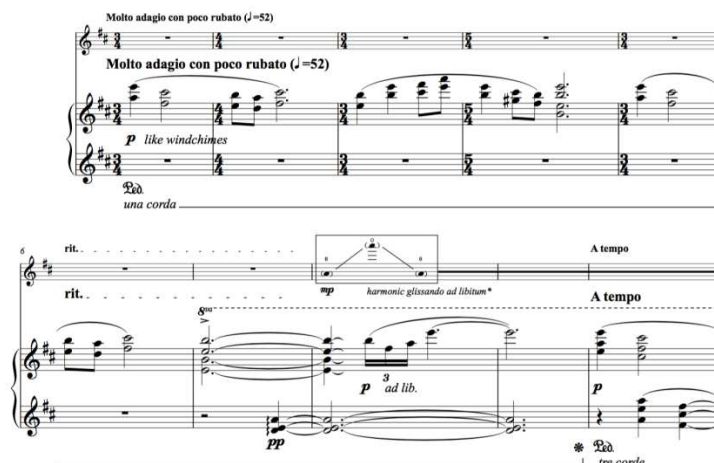


Figure 18: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, V. "...peace transcendent," mm.1-10¹⁰³

The development of the middle section went in a much different direction than I originally expected; I originally was hesitant to write something in my former Neo-Romantic idiom out of fear of people considering it to be “cheesy,” but “I distinctly remember Dr. Rose responding to this concern of mine by saying something to the extent of ‘My wife and I always buy this cheese called Seriously Sharp Cheddar. I have to tell you Chris, *this* cheese isn’t sharp enough!’”¹⁰⁴ This comical way of telling me to go all the way with this style was an encouragement; in a way, it felt like I had gone “full circle” (despite having barely scratched the surface of compositional techniques) and was now free to write in whatever style I wished. In addition, it allowed me to fully express the full range of emotions I had dealing with in that semester. In my program notes, I write “Equally as important as the peace is the struggle to retain this peace, an idea represented in the more ‘lucid’ middle section of the movement. This lullaby section develops organically and builds in dynamics and intensity to the pinnacle of emotion, as the dreamer tries desperately to hold on to the sensation of peace, feeling that it is

¹⁰³ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

¹⁰⁴ Lowry Interview.

threatened.”¹⁰⁵ The idea of struggling to retain peace might be a foreign concept to many, but it was a very personal issue for me, as someone who deals with bipolar disorder.

After the climax, the A section (assuming we can classify the movement in the same way as the first, a fantasia with ternary elements) returns, “this time slightly jaded by harmonic ambiguities.”¹⁰⁶ The pentatonic chiming of the beginning is presented this time in A-flat major over a constant A pedal point—one of my earliest experiments with bitonality. The uncertainty of the piece decreases as the piece nears the end; “[a]ll darkness and negative emotions begin to evanesce as the piano modulates to a different key; a voice in the distance cries out, practically begging to stay in the old key, but it eventually resolves and peacefully fades away in the new key, almost as if it was trying to get there all along.”¹⁰⁷ This final modulation to the key of E brings the piece to a somber close, heightened by the *lontano* tone of viola played with a metal practice mute.

3.7 Performance Guide

When I first started composing this piece, I did not expect it to end up being as long and complex as it became. With all the final edits, revisions and expansions, the full piece should last around twenty-eight to twenty-nine minutes; however, the recording turned out to be just over thirty-one minutes, so there obviously is a great deal of flexibility in the tempos and pacing. When writing the piece, I wanted to ensure that everything was possible and well-written for the viola while not being overly easy either. I find that if I compose at the viola, I quickly pass off ideas as being too difficult if I cannot play them at the initial conception, but if I compose away from the instrument, I tend to write a bit more adventurously. Trey Dayton said something interesting about his piano writing: “Personally, it is a challenge to myself to make my piano

¹⁰⁵ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

parts beyond my own ability.”¹⁰⁸ I feel the same way about my viola writing, which is why I tried as much as possible to compose this piece away from the instrument, relying on my own thoughts and intuitions about what works and what does not. The result is a piece that is very violistic but presents a number of challenges that should provide the player with a worthwhile learning experience. The piece also presents a few extended techniques in ways that I believe will be fun for the player as well as an accessible foray into contemporary music for those not accustomed to playing it.

The piano part, on the other hand, is less idiomatic; I am not a pianist, but I always try to visualize what my music would look like when played. The original piano parts to the second and fourth movements were all but impossible, and the revisions to these parts included the deletion of unnecessary doubled octaves, simplification of chords, and, in some cases, completely rewritten passages. The current piano part is completely possible and musically sound, though definitely not pianistic in the strict sense. However, after recording the piece with Zih Yun, I realized that the writing is actually quite effective and taps into a different side of pianism—associated more with block chords and resonance than with florid arpeggiations and runs.

The first movement requires an equal amount of freedom and rhythmical precision; it constantly contrasts *rubato* playing with more *semplice* passages. The opening viola line, starting in the lowest register of the instrument, should be very free, but not at the expense of the integrity of the rhythm. Marked both *ad libitum* and *quasi recitative*, this statement of the main thematic motive should obviously not be rigid, but the performer should aim to ensure that any rubatos taken do not obscure the rhythmic hierarchy or break the structure of the phrase. I

¹⁰⁸ Peter Dayton (composer of *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by the author, Questionnaire, March 2017.

recommend using a fairly introverted vibrato, neither too wide nor too narrow; the violist should not give away too much at the beginning.



Figure 19: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, I. "...veiled countryside," mm.1-13¹⁰⁹

The full theme is finally presented at measure 21. Here, the *semplice* tempo marking should be taken as both an indication of tempo and of style. The viola here should have a folk-like quality and should not take any time outside of the structure of the beats, which should be aided by the plodding nature of the accompanying piano part. I recommend using a quasi-*flautando* bowstroke with not too much core to the tone in order to achieve a more pastoral tone that is not too extroverted (of course, more core should be added in when playing on the C string in particular in order to adequately sustain the sound across the instrument). I also would suggest using a light vibrato that does not carry through the entire phrase; there is a vocal quality to this writing, and having an overly expressive vibrato on every note would diminish this effect.

At measure 29, the piano takes over the melody while the viola provides a sort of musette-like drone; the violist should come down significantly in volume but should still shape the line to bring out the harmonic changes. The transitional section at measure 33 is when both instruments begin to truly open up; marked "Con Moto," this should not be immediately faster,

¹⁰⁹ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

but it should imply a gradual increase in motion and intensity. The D at the top of the thirty-second note run in the viola should be treated almost as if it was the climax of the piece, but the diminuendo should be significant.



Figure 20: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, I. "...veiled countryside," mm.21-24, showing the main theme¹¹⁰

The small cadenza that follows this can be interpreted however the player feels, but there should be a strong sense of communication between both players, as the entrance of the piano should line up exactly with the viola on beat 3 of measure 40. The “slow unmeasured tremolo” in the left hand of the piano should be gently pulsing at whatever rate the pianist wants, but should not be hectic or hurried; it would be effective to gradually increase the speed of this tremolo along with the crescendo, but it is, again, entirely up to the player. Leading into the B-section, the violist has a series of ascending arpeggios based on a D-suspended chord; the final four notes, despite being harmonics, should be loud and impassioned—the violist should strongly articulate these notes through faster bow speed and should aim to make them stronger than the stopped notes before.

Measure 42 signals the first modulation in the piece; this change of tonal center from G to D seems to indicate change of mood from the darker, brooding atmosphere of the beginning to something brighter and more intense.

¹¹⁰ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

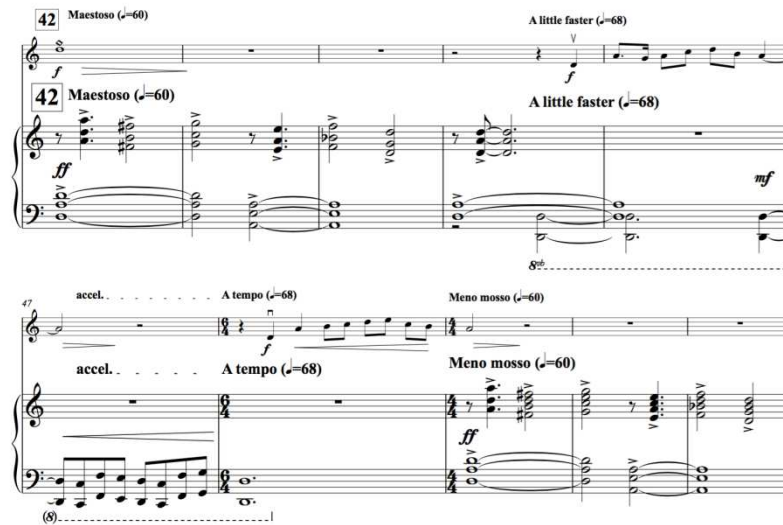


Figure 21: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, I. "...veiled countryside," mm.42-51¹¹¹

After the climax, the “wailing” indication on the glissando can be interpreted both through a slow, painful slide as well as a heightened vibrato. I advocate using a very dark-sounding mute for the ending; “I used an Alpine Mute Co. Professional Mute, which has the brass disc in the middle; this mute provides a very dark and warm timbre that adds to the ‘veiled’ tone of the movement.”¹¹²

The second movement presents the violist with the challenge of projecting a fast pizzicato melody over the piano. When the theme comes back at the end, there is an optional instruction to play with a pick instead (the original version had this at the beginning as well, but I took it out to preserve the pure pizzicato tone), in order not only to project the sound better but also to add another different timbre. If the pick is used, it is easier to execute the passage with the viola held under the arm like a mandolin.

The third movement starts with a viola cadenza that is written *sul C*. It is entirely up to the performer whether or not to observe this for the entire cadenza—in the second strophe, I

¹¹¹ Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*.

¹¹² Lowry Interview.

choose to go to the G string in order to project a cleaner and more pleasant tone. The quarter tone glissando passage can be executed merely through a slow, measured vibrato; the finger should barely move in order to achieve this effect. I suggest using a mute that is dark but not as “veiled” as that used in the first movement. I used an original Menuhin Shield mute—“the first mute I ever owned and have had since I was twelve years old; this mute provides a very dark timbre but still allows for enough projection to not have to fight through the louder dynamics.”¹¹³ The *scordatura* at the end is entirely optional, but it should not cause any problems. In order to achieve the right tone and volume on the tailpiece, the player will need to use a very slow bow speed and a significant amount of arm weight.

The fourth movement is the most technically difficult for both instruments. As with the folk-like sections of the first movement, I suggest not using too romantic of a tone or vibrato for the theme. A *marcato* stroke should be used almost throughout the entire A section. The *pesante* strokes in the middle section should be taken literally; the player should not be afraid to scratch the tone. It is up to the payer whether to play with the coil or *sul ponticello*; the coil on my current bow is a fixed part of the stick, whereas on my old bow it was separate piece of metal wound around the stick, which came unwound when playing this passage several years ago. The violist should use his or her best judgment on this section. The difficult runs at the end should be executed with a small, compact stroke in the lower middle of the bow, and the triplet octaves should be played accented at the tip.

The ranges of the harmonic glissandos in the fifth movement should be as “ad lib” as the dynamics and speed of the glissandos themselves. Though the suggested range changes, it is entirely up to the performer to interpret these as he or she wishes. In general, the pacing for the main theme in this movement is quite *rubato*, but should still stay in a clear tempo. The middle

¹¹³ Lowry Interview.

section should be played as romantic as possible. The very ending fades away until the player is instructed to use a “heavy mute;” for this, I used a metal practice mute, but it could work equally well with a rubber or wooden practice mute as well.

CHAPTER FOUR: *MILESTONE MINIATURES FOR SOLO VIOLA*

4.1 History

I wrote many important pieces in undergrad between the initial “completion” of the *Suite for Viola and Piano* and the start of the *Milestone Miniatures*. Some of these pieces, such as *Livewire! for Flute, Clarinet, and Horn*, the *Concert Fantasy for Trombone and Piano*, and *Time Lapse: Five-and-a-Half Reflections on a Tennessee Sunset* for solo piano all have been successful in one way or another. I wrote *Milestone Miniatures* as a way to musically look back on the accomplishments of my time at Vanderbilt. The initial ideas of this piece came to me about a week before my senior composition recital, and as some of my planned music for that recital had fallen through, I decided to write the piece for myself to play on this recital (November 11, 2011). I wrote the first movement quite quickly, maybe even in one sitting; the second movement (which I had listed as the third movement at the time) came a little slower, partly due to coming down with a stomach virus two days before my recital. I didn’t fully recover from this until a few hours before the recital started, so I had not had time or energy to finish composing the piece, let alone practice it. In the recital itself, I performed the first movement and then essentially improvised something from the sketches of the second movement; this improvisation was part of what inspired the final version.

After graduation, I began sketching ideas for the third and fourth movements, but I never got around to truly writing the pieces until early 2016. As the piece was meant to reflect on my experiences, I felt it might come more naturally after letting some time pass after graduation. In general, I was right—especially in regards to the fourth movement. The movements were titled much later; in the recital program they were only listed by Roman numerals.

Here's an excerpt from my program notes:

I have often wondered what I will look back on late in life and remember as being particularly significant. I am currently too young to know what important events will happen in my life, but I do feel that there have already been many monumental moments over these 27 years that have shaped me into who I am today. I have begun writing a set of short pieces for solo viola, crafted loosely after the literary tradition of “Bildungsroman”—essentially the growth of a protagonist through many life-changing events—that reflect my feelings on these events, hence the name *Milestone Miniatures*.¹¹⁴

In this case, the theme of the piece centered around my studies at Blair, both pre-collegiate and collegiate. I worked on this piece with Michael Rose, who was the one that introduced me to the idea of “*Bildungsroman*.”¹¹⁵

The first movement, which has seen the least amount of revision since the initial sketches, is based on musical “spellings” of the word “Blair,” which I will explain later. The second movement, which has seen the most revision, quotes a few pieces I wrote while studying at Blair. The third movement, entirely pizzicato, quotes a few themes heard while in college. And the fourth movement looks back on everything from the mind of someone who has graduated.

Aside from my piano suite that I had written just prior to this, I had never written anything for a completely solo instrument, so I was excited for the freedom this would bring. I chose to use many different colors and techniques, as well as different kinds of pauses, shown in the image below.

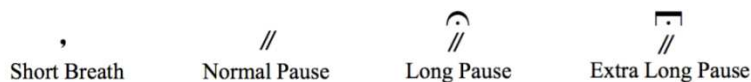


Figure 22: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, notation of different lengths of pauses.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Christopher Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola, Set I, Opus 13*, Christopher Lowry Music (ASCAP): 2011/2016.

¹¹⁵ Christopher Lowry (author and composer of *Milestone Miniatures* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by Perla Fernández, Questionnaire, March 2017.

4.2 First Movement: “Fantasy on ‘B.L.A.I.R.’”

The thematic material of the first movement is built on different musical realizations of the word “Blair,” essentially meaning

assigning certain pitch classes to certain letters. I can’t remember all of the permutations of this that I used (I have a sheet somewhere where I sketched a bunch of different possibilities out), but I know I had to be creative to make some of them work. For instance, the main motive is B-flat, A, C, E, and D, which I loosely derived from B=B-flat (from the German notation), L=A (“L” standing for “La”), A=C (since “La” was just used, the repeating A was reset to C), I=C (“I” standing for “Mi” without the “M,” which is a bit of a stretch, but I guess the whole thing is), and R=D (where “R” stands for “Re”). Another instance can be seen in the motive B-flat, A, and E-flat, where B=B-flat, LA=A, and IR=E-flat (where “IR” can be seen as a reverse spelling of “Ri”). I know I used some other techniques, all of which were equally silly and yet provided interesting musical material.¹¹⁷

I also chose to write in a much more fragmented way than I ever had before in an attempt to understand better the expressive potential of rests and caesuras. There is also a great deal of experimentation with different kinds of vibrato, which is shown in the excerpt below.

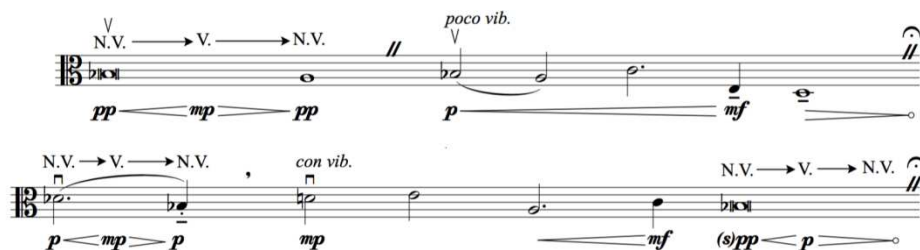


Figure 23: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, I. "Fantasy on 'B.L.A.I.R.'", excerpt 1¹¹⁸

Left-hand pizzicato becomes motivically important throughout the later movements, and its introduction in the middle of the first movement serves to set this up. It is never used in a virtuosic sort of way as it is generally thought of in showpieces, but rather it serves to punctuate flowing melodic lines as well as provide a difference in timbre from ordinary pizzicato passages.

¹¹⁶ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

¹¹⁷ Lowry Interview.

¹¹⁸ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

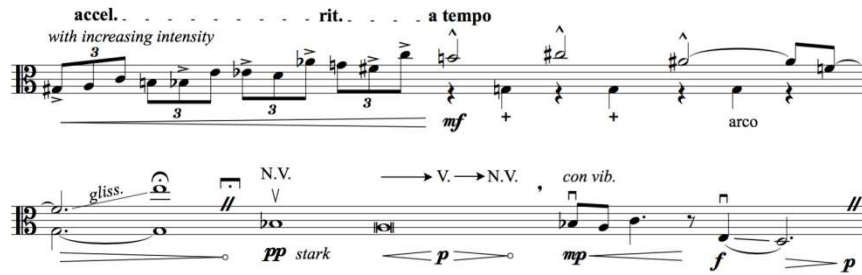


Figure 24: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, I. "Fantasy on 'B.L.A.I.R.'", excerpt 2, beginning to show the motivic importance of left-hand pizzicato.¹¹⁹

4.3 Second Movement: "Fragmented Rhapsody"

A strongly contrasted movement, not only with the previous but also within itself, the second movement has existed in many different versions; "[a]s a rhapsody, I intended this movement to be a freely flowing, declamatory piece with several different sections. The primary section consists of loud quartal and quintal chords interspersed with hidden quotes from earlier pieces of mine."¹²⁰

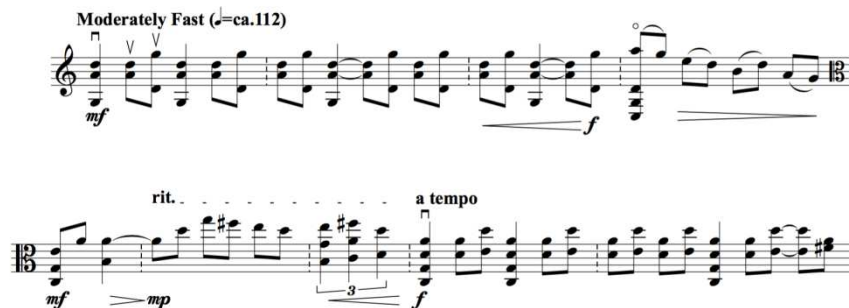


Figure 25: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, II. "Fragmented Rhapsody," excerpt 1, showing the quartal and quintal harmonies.¹²¹

This contrasts with a lyrical, "carefree" section played *flautando* that derives from the main theme to *Celebration Overture*."

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Lowry Interview.

¹²¹ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

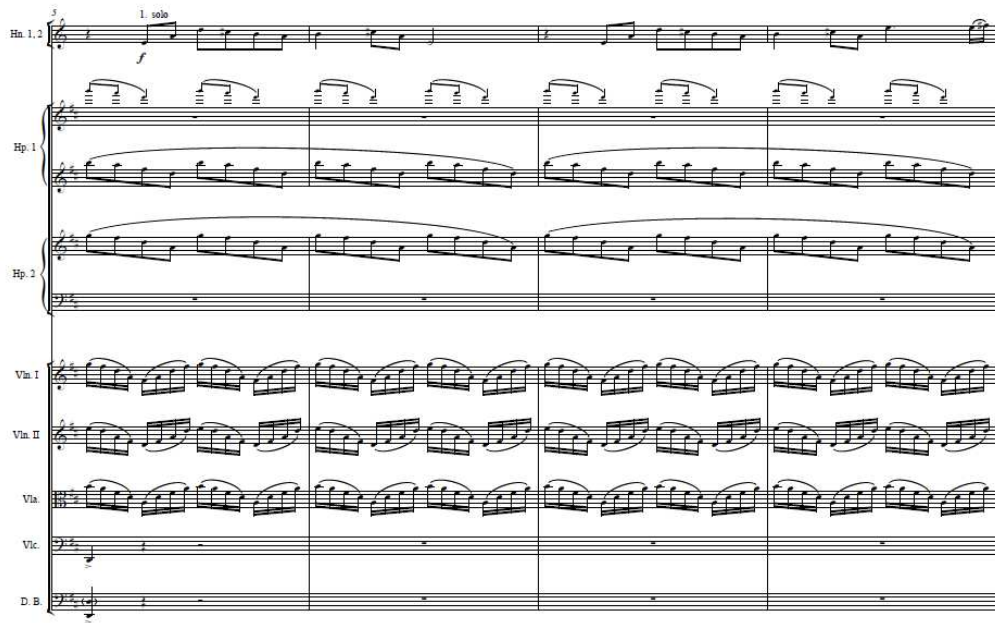


Figure 26: Lowry, *Celebration Overture*, mm.5-8, excerpt from main theme in horn (sounding one perfect fifth lower than written).¹²²



Figure 27: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, II. "Fragmented Rhapsody," excerpt 2, quoting main theme from *Celebration Overture*.¹²³

This middle section also quotes a few other earlier pieces, “including my *Concert Fantasy for Trombone and Piano* and even the last movement of my *Suite for Viola and Piano*. The pitch content of these excerpts is largely the same, with just a few alterations, as well as left-hand pizzicato open string punctuations—all of this contributes to the quartal/quintal sound of the movement.”¹²⁴

¹²² Christopher Lowry, *Celebration Overture*, *Opus 1 No. 1*, Christopher Lowry Music (ASCAP): 2006.

¹²³ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

¹²⁴ Lowry Interview.



Figure 28: Lowry, *Concert Fantasy for Trombone and Piano*, mm.1-9, the opening theme.¹²⁵



Figure 29: Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, V. "...peace transcendent," mm.137-145, excerpt from main theme.¹²⁶



Figure 30: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, II. "Fragmented Rhapsody," excerpt 3, quoting main themes from both *Concert Fantasy* and the finale of *Suite for Viola and Piano*.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Christopher Lowry, *Concert Fantasy for Trombone and Piano*, Opus 9, Christopher Lowry Music (ASCAP): 2009.

¹²⁶ Christopher Lowry, *Suite for Viola and Piano*, Opus 5, Christopher Lowry Music (ASCAP): 2008-09 (Revised 2011/2017).

¹²⁷ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

This movement also uses both styles of *col legno* (*battuto*, or struck with the wood of the bow; and *tratto*, bowed with the wood) motivically.

4.4 Third Movement: “Homage”

The movement that was the most enjoyable to compose was the third. The entire movement is pizzicato, with the player instructed to sit and hold the viola like a mandolin or banjo; any different styles of pizzicato and other percussive effects are used. The piece is anchored by a series of dissonant strummed chords with miniature interludes separating them.

There are two themes to this movement. One of these two themes is the tune to the Sigma Alpha Iota Chorale; I know this theme isn’t exclusive to Blair, as SAI is an international music fraternity, but it was a tune I heard quite frequently. While I in no way endorse SAI, nor am I familiar with the lyrics, I’ve always liked the tune, finding it to have great potential to be harmonized in a somewhat Renaissance-esque style.

Figure 31: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, III. "Homage," excerpt 1, showing re-harmonization of the “SAI Chorale.”¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

The other tune I have reappropriated is the tune to Vanderbilt's Alma Mater, an old ballad by H. S. Thompson called "Annie Lisle." I chose to harmonize this theme a bit differently than the previous, using more dissonant chords and atypical voicings. As with before, the phrases are interrupted by either repeats of the motivic strumming chords from the beginning or with other effects, such as playing with the fingernails, drumming on the body of the instrument, or achieving a tremolo by alternating right- and left-hand pizzicato. Every phrase of the tune starts in a different key than the previous.



Figure 32: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, III. "Homage," excerpt 2, showing repurposing of the opening of "Annie Lisle," tune of the Vanderbilt Alma Mater.¹²⁹

The movement ends with a repeat of almost all of the strummed dissonances, interspersed with quiet tremolo reminiscences on the motives from the first movement; the final tremolo is a glissando all the way up the fingerboard and decrescendo al niente. The player is given the instruction to tremolo through the silence, with an optional note to pantomime this tremolo for several seconds afterwards. Ideally, if done effectively, the audience should not be able to discern when the actual sound ceases and will possibly even perceive a continuation of the sound even during the pantomiming.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

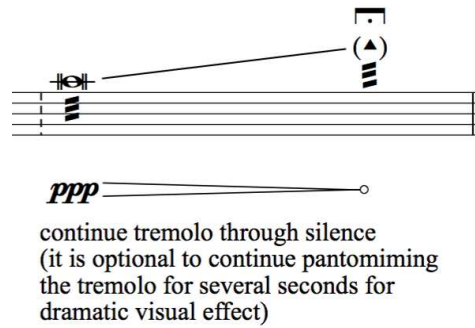


Figure 33: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, III. "Homage," excerpt 3, final glissando al niente.¹³⁰

4.5 Fourth Movement: "Rhapsodic Reprise"

Though primarily referring to the second movement, the fourth movement recycles ideas and motives from all three of the previous movements.

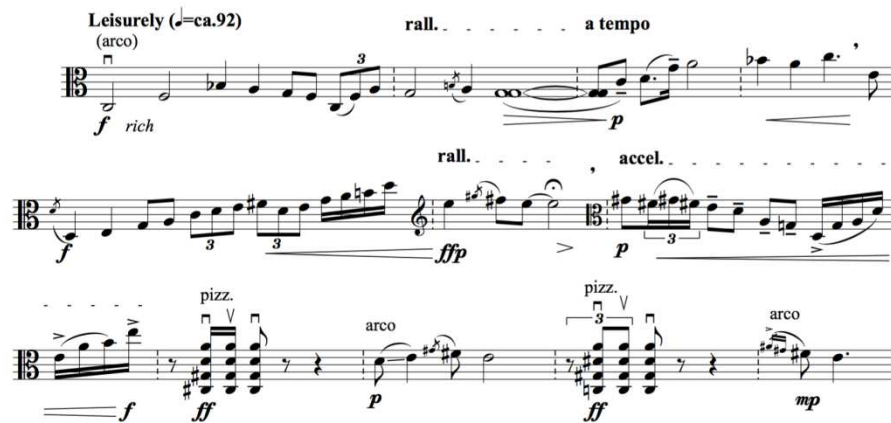


Figure 34: Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*, IV. "Rhapsodic Reprise," excerpt 1, showing motives from all three previous movements.¹³¹

After a fragmented opening and following a long pause, the references to the second movement become obvious, with an extended section of *bariolage* string crossings starting on all four open strings; as this increases in dynamics, tempo, and intensity, the harmonies and different permutations from the opening chords of the second movement are all brought back

¹³⁰ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

¹³¹ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

until the climax of the piece, a series of whole tone scales that transition into the ending section, an almost direct quote from movement two.

The coda “ends *fortissississimo*, followed by an extra long fermata rest, which the player should observe as a dramatic visual effect (granted, the audience might start applauding immediately, which would ruin this effect).”¹³² Compositionally, I consider this piece to be a significant step forward in my musical language as well as a nice solo viola *intermezzo* to an otherwise “accompanied” program of music.

4.6 Performance Guide

One of the freeing aspects of playing non-metered music is that there is much room for interpretation of rhythms and tempos. In my performance notes in the score, I write: “Given the lack of written meter, rhythms are relative and should be taken as literally as the player feels they should be taken; tasteful *rubato* is always welcome. The difference in each note value should still be made as apparent as possible within this construct.”¹³³ Of course, this also provides a challenge for musicians that are not used to playing contemporary music; this music requires a significant amount of creativity and imagination in order to bring out its full potential.

The “vibrato crescendos” in the first movement should be executed with control and pacing. The speed and width of the vibrato should increase and decrease proportionally to the rate of the crescendo and diminuendo. The big glissando before the restatement of the theme should be long and slow, carrying throughout the length of the note to which it is attached. The changes from *sul tasto* to *sul ponticello* and vice versa should be rather extreme.

The faster sections of the second movement should be fairly set and square in tempo while the “carefree” middle sections can be quite *rubato*. I recommend using a very fast bow

¹³² Lowry Interview.

¹³³ Lowry, *Milestone Miniatures*.

speed with very little pressure for the *flautando* sections. The *tratto* tends to work better when the strings are already coated in rosin.

The third movement will be a challenge for anyone not experienced with plucked string instruments. I advocate experimenting with whatever works for each individual player in this regard, as it is likely to be quite different from player to player. However, most of the passages will likely work better when played with the thumb. The “drumming on the instrument” sections can be executed either by actually hitting the body of the viola or by tapping on the strings on top of the fingerboard without letting them ring. I took takes of both styles, and both sounds work equally well.

The fourth movement has very little difference in playing styles than the other three, so there is not too much to say here other than about the middle *bariolage* section; the player is instructed to bounce the stroke at some point, similar to the stroke in Paganini’s first caprice. In order to make this work, I would stay in the middle of the bow, using very little bow speed, and give an accent with the elbow on every down bow to make this stroke work.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE RECORDING AND EDITING PROCESS

5.1 Microphones, Set-Up, and Recording

The recording process for this project is something I did not enter into lightly. Though I have a great deal of experience in the recording studio outside of the classical genre, the precision and consistency needed in order to make a classical recording effectively is something that takes a great deal of determination and concentration. Until recently, my actual classical recording experience had been limited to playing in the orchestra accompanying cellist Dennis Parker for a couple of his CDs. Last year, however, I was given an assistantship in the LSU Recording Studio, which gave me the knowledge and equipment to finally bring my ideas to reality. In April, I had the privilege of performing and recording Dinos Constantinides's *Grecian Variations for Solo Viola, LRC 106a* with the Louisiana Sinfonietta for CD release on Magni Publications.¹³⁴ The pre-concert rehearsal and the concert were both recorded, and I recorded the dress rehearsal the previous day in order to make sure I had enough takes. I did all the editing from that point, using the knowledge and skills I had developed through my own projects from the past (primarily synthesized mock-ups of compositions or instrumental arrangements of hymns I recorded at home). I did the same thing with Dinos's *Assemblages II for Viola and String Orchestra* a few months ago; this will be released on a future CD of viola works by Dinos. The first time I actually engineered a recording was last summer, when Elias Goldstein recorded all of Paganini's *24 Caprices* on viola for Centaur Records; I engineered and edited the entire project, which turned out quite well. When I first came to LSU in 2012, I had already decided I wanted to record my CD, but I did not have the skills or knowledge to actually pull it off, but

¹³⁴ *Musical Potpourri: Works by Dinos Constantinides*, Louisiana Sinfonietta, Dinos Constantinides, Christopher Lowry, viola soloist, Recorded April 2016, Magni Publications MP-21005, 2016, 1 compact disc.

thanks to my assistantship, performances, and engineering experience, I finally felt capable of attaining my goal.

I don't intend to get too in-depth with the technicalities of recording in this paper, as there is a wealth of good information in this regard that is easily obtainable online. But, there are a few principals to cover in order to understand how this project worked. Essentially, every microphone has a polar pattern, which is the way it picks up the sound. The three main polar patterns are "cardioid," "omnidirectional," and "figure-of-eight," shown below.

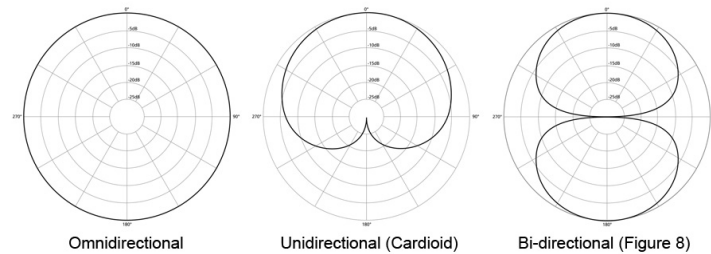


Figure 35: Common Microphone Polar Patterns, showing the "shape" in which sound is "heard" by the microphones.¹³⁵

The main microphone that hangs above the stage in the LSU Recital Hall is an AKG C426B; this is a wonderful dual-diaphragm stereo microphone that is unfortunately out of production but enjoyed a sort of vogue in archival recordings, as evidenced by its use in many concert halls, including the Isaac Stern Auditorium in Carnegie Hall (technically, this is a C422 model, but the two mics are very closely-related).¹³⁶ All of the recordings I mentioned above, including Elias's Paganini CD, were all recorded using this single microphone, which is pictured below.

¹³⁵ Ken Theriot, "Pros and cons of the Figure 8 mic pickup pattern," *Disc Makers Blog*, (March 9, 2015), <http://blog.discmakers.com/2015/03/pros-and-cons-of-the-figure-8-mic/>.

¹³⁶ "Carnegie Hall Makes History," *Digital Pro Sound*, July 17, 2001, accessed March 12, 2017, http://www.digitalprosound.com/2001/07_jul/news/yam_carnegie.htm.



Figure 36: AKG C426B Stereo Microphone¹³⁷

The mic has a rotatable capsule with multiple polar patterns that allow it to record either in Mid-Side or X/Y configurations. The mic in the recital hall is set to M/S, which is the combination of a front-facing cardioid capsule (in this case, pointing at the stage) and a figure-eight capsule pointed at the wall. These signals are recorded and run through a decoder that converts this into a stereo image of variable width—essentially, by increasing or decreasing the level of the side signal, an audio engineer can create the illusion of a wider or narrower stereo field. Below is a diagram of the M/S pattern.

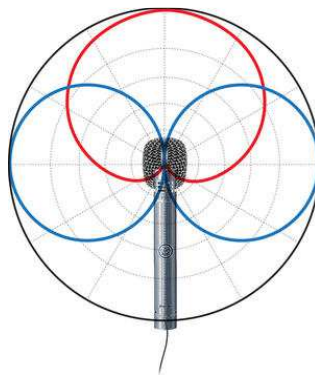


Figure 37: Diagram of the Mid-Side Stereo Configuration.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Chris Radley, “Mic Blog 02: AKG C426B,” *DVoiceBox*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://dvoicebox.com/tag/akg-c426-b/>.

¹³⁸ Chad Johnson, “Recording with the Mid-Side Microphone Configuration,” *B&H Explora (B&H Photo Video)*, accessed March 8, 2017, <https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora/audio/tips-and-solutions/recording-mid-side-microphone-configuration>.

Typically, this C426B is the only microphone used for recording in the hall, and in most cases it produces an adequate result. However, for this recording, I opted for more control over the balance, articulation, and ambience than what can be obtained with only one microphone. I decided to add a microphone for the viola and another stereo microphone for the piano, using the C426B as a room microphone. I had the option of adding another pair offstage in omnidirectional pattern for ambience, but I ended up deciding not to, as I felt there would be enough reverberation and ambience present in the other tracks already. The microphone I chose for the viola is another AKG product, the C414; an industry standard for many sound sources, the C414 can be recorded in all three aforementioned polar patterns as well as a few other slightly less common patterns.



Figure 38: AKG C414 Microphone.¹³⁹

I set the microphone approximately two or three feet away from me on a stand at roughly the same height as the F-holes of my viola. I recorded it in cardioid pattern for a dry, more direct tone than what would be achieved through the hanging C426B.

¹³⁹ “AKG C414 XLS: Reference multipattern condenser microphone,” *AKG: Professional Audio Solutions*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.ake.com/pro/p/c414xls>.

For the piano, I used a RØDE NT4 Stereo Condenser Microphone, shown below.



Figure 39: RØDE NT4 Stereo Condenser Microphone.¹⁴⁰

The NT4 has two diaphragms arranged in X/Y configuration, which allows for an accurate (albeit not too wide) stereo image. A diagram of the X/Y configuration is shown below.

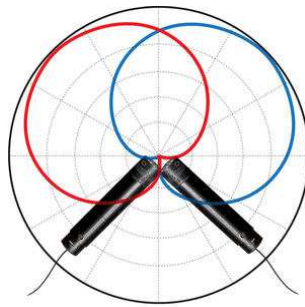


Figure 40: Diagram of X/Y Stereo Configuration.¹⁴¹

I placed the microphone on a boom stand to the left of the piano, pointing inside at slightly left-of-center of the keyboard—basically, right behind the piano’s music stand;

Of course, from the pianist’s perspective, the lowest notes will sound more to the left and the highest to the right; there are many ways to mic a piano, but usually some form of stereo technique to simulate this perspective is used, which in some ways is good but in some ways gives an “inaccurate” representation of what is heard in the hall. If anything, an audience member would perceive the high notes as being closer to them and the low ones farther away, though in most cases the entire range of the piano would probably be sensed as coming from one place, if that makes sense. The choice to use the NT4 on the piano was clear to me, as the

¹⁴⁰ “RØDE: NT4 X/Y Stereo Condenser Microphone,” *RØDE Microphones*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.ode.com/microphones/nt4>.

¹⁴¹ Chad Johnson, “Recording with the Mid-Side Microphone Configuration.”

dual-diaphragm configuration made the set-up easy and clean, and the XY position allows for a definite stereo image that is wide enough to be noticeable but narrow enough to prevent the aforementioned “inaccurate” representation. Close-miking the piano allows more control over the attack and definition of the sound, while most of the tone still comes from the room mic as well as some spill into the viola mic.¹⁴²

After setting the microphones up, I plugged them all into the panel on the wall of the stage and patched them through to the preamps in the recording studio, which then allowed them to be recorded to ProTools on the recording studio’s Mac Pro computer. Everything was tracked in 24-bit/44.1 kHz and saved as individual WAV files.

The first time I experimented with the additional microphones was the LSU Composer’s Forum concert on February 6th, on which I played both the Dayton and Hallum; I did not really have a chance to do an adequate soundcheck before the performance, so I just set the levels to where I thought would work (the knob for the House microphone levels set to about one o’clock, the viola microphone at about twelve o’clock, and the piano at about ten or eleven, which I was afraid might be a bit low). By some miracle, the levels were set perfect for the two pieces I played, and the piano microphone, which remained in position for the whole concert, ended up clipping for the rest of the concert—how I managed to set the level so perfectly for these two pieces while it was too loud for everything else is beyond me. This concert resulted in the first good take for both pieces, as well as my newfound confidence to record the rest of the project. Daniel Liebeskind and I reconvened to record the Dayton and Hallum pieces again on February 9th and 11th. I recorded the *Milestone Miniatures* on February 12th and 15th, and the *Suite* on the 13th, 17th, 18th, and 24th.¹⁴³ The set up and recording never changed for any of these (minus the obvious lack of a piano microphone for *Milestone*).

¹⁴² Christopher Lowry (author and composer of *Milestone Miniatures* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*), interviewed by Perla Fernández, Questionnaire, March 2017.

¹⁴³ Lowry Interview.

5.2 Editing, Mixing, and Post-Production

After everything was recorded, the raw audio tracks were copied to a flash drive and moved to my Macbook Pro and Mac Mini computers, where I was able to edit and mix everything using Logic Pro X. Generally, in classical music, there is not as much processing that happens after the fact as in other genres of music, due to the need for a more natural sound that any more than a small amount of processing and editing will blemish. Even so, there is a certain amount of cursory editing that is expected, such as reduction of the bass frequencies in the room signal to get rid of the low hum of the air conditioner, careful splicing together of different takes, and some slight automation of volume of individual tracks.¹⁴⁴ I ended up adding a small amount of reverb to the piano and viola tracks just to smooth out the dry signals slightly. As far as “placing” the instruments on the stage, I panned the viola right in the center, despite me standing a few feet to the left of the center of the stage in reality; I “panned the piano about 50% left and right, and widened out the MS room mic about 80% in order to provide more ambience as well as a larger stereo field.”¹⁴⁵

Dynamic-wise, I applied a light amount of compression in order to try to keep a more consistent volume throughout the recording without losing the intensity of the extreme “softs” and “louds.” The actual volumes are quite dependent on the style of the individual pieces: “The actual mix changes from piece to piece, but in general I keep the viola quite present in the mix and the room a little less than this; I bring the piano up and down in the mix to add definition whenever it is needed, but I find too much of it in the mix becomes pretty overpowering.”¹⁴⁶ There is no such thing as a perfect performance, nor is there such thing as a perfect take; so

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Lowry Interview.

needless to say, many takes were recorded, and many edits and splices occurred—“In terms of splicing between takes...well, I’d rather not give too much away on that front!”¹⁴⁷

5.3 Challenges, Expected or Otherwise

As expected, this process was not without its problems. The biggest hurdle was time and energy—in order to record in the hall, it was necessary to wait until night in order to avoid schedule conflicts as well as ambient crowd noise from outside the hall bleeding into the microphones. The problem with this, of course, is that it usually would entail recording around 11:00pm, as set-up time would usually take well over thirty minutes. Naturally, recording takes quite a bit of time, and it’s hard to play consistently well when tired; I usually could record for about an hour and a half before being completely exhausted. Following this, tearing down, while not taking as long as setting up, would add another approximately thirty minutes to the process.

I calculated the amount of time I spent recording for this project, not counting set-up or tear-down time, and it totaled ten hours, forty-one minutes, and thirty-one seconds of record time.¹⁴⁸ This is actually a rather conservative amount of time considering the full recording is just under an hour. Naturally, given that editing involves listening to everything that has already been recorded multiple times, as well as listening to and proofing the results multiple times, I would guess I spent at least forty hours editing, though there’s no way to calculate for sure. Obviously, this also does not account for the time spent practicing the pieces, or for that matter, putting in the work revising and formatting my own pieces.

The next big challenge was working with ambient noises. In general, the only constant noise occurring in the hall is a deep hum and high hiss from the air conditioner; the hiss is not overbearing enough to bother me, plus some of this range of background noise is essential to the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

natural sound of a classical recording, but the low hum becomes a problem when I listen to the recording through a stereo with a subwoofer. This was not too difficult to remedy in post-production, but some other sounds did not prove as easy to dispose of. For instance, the recital hall stage creaks every time I move back and forth; I tried to stand completely still while playing, but it still would squeak occasionally, which picked up quite loudly in the viola microphone. Another viola-related issue was a click sound that would happen every time my left hand would come away from the body of the instrument when shifting down from a high position; no matter how hard I tried, I could not get this sound to cease. This was something I had never noticed before recording, but unfortunately it picked up very loudly in the viola microphone and was slightly audible in the house microphone as well. Due to this, I had to be very diligent and calculated with when I would shift, changing it from take to take so that a splice could be made to obscure it later. The piano also had some issues in this regard, in addition to being almost always out of tune—when the soft pedal is released, the action of the keyboard moving back to the left would make a loud clunk sound that would pick up in all of the microphones. The only way to remedy this was either recording extended sections with the soft pedal and then cross-fading into the *tre corde* takes or just recording entirely without using the soft pedal. Also, the piano benches proved to be quite noisy, and we found ourselves experimenting a lot before finding a piano bench (as well as sitting position on the bench) that would not cause noise when moving.

Perhaps the biggest annoyance of doing this project all myself was the impracticality of being both the performer and engineer. If the control for the recording equipment was on stage with me, this would not have been an issue, but of course, that was not the case:

Getting to the recording studio from the hall involves walking out to the lobby and walking up the stairs to the studio, which overlooks the recital hall from

behind the audience. I would have to hit the record button from there, and then run back down the stairs to get back to hall, play, and then run back up to stop the recording. Other than just being slightly annoying, the main issue with this is that there is no one up there to monitor the recording process. Ideally, nothing should change if everything is set right, but there is always that one time that things don't go as planned. For instance, during one recording session, the computer crashed, deleting over an hour of takes (to make matters worse, this was in the fourth movement of the *Suite*, which is one of the hardest to play for both instruments); this was one of the points that made me realize the seeming futility of this project.¹⁴⁹

Other challenges in post-production involved some challenging splices; generally, a cross-fade from one take to another will work if it's right in between two notes and if it lasts no more than a fraction of a second. Of course, this is not always the case, and I had some difficult splices to make. A few of these were made difficult by the difference in tone, dynamics, or even tempo from one take to another, but some were more tricky for other reasons—for instance, the sustained notes at the beginning of the Hallum did not allow for easy editing; different takes revealed not only slight variations in pitch and volume, but also different speeds of vibrato and even inconsistent distances from the microphone. The harmonic glissandi in the opening of the fifth movement of the *Suite* also posed a problem; the aleatoric nature of this figure was such that no two takes lined up in the same way, which made editing almost impossible.

5.4 Conclusion

I hope my research has provided useful for violists who are looking for more new repertoire of high quality and for any classical musicians who might want to venture into the self-recording realm. I personally believe all of these pieces can become legitimate pieces of standard repertoire, and I believe all of them will continue to be performed for many years to come. In the spirit of a composition dissertation, I have included the entire scores to both of my pieces in the appendices to provide easier access to them.

¹⁴⁹ Lowry Interview.

As for the recording, I hope I have proven that it is indeed possible to produce an entire project of this magnitude by oneself; however, I am sure one would argue that it is highly impractical, partly due to the high cost of equipment that is up to standard for classical recording, and partly due to the need for booking time in a hall or similar space. I still stand by my findings, regardless of their practicality, and I hope soon to begin working on volume two of my “Viola in the Twenty-First Century” recording series.

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APPENDIX A: SELECTED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS OF COMPOSERS

Interview Questionnaire

Project: “The Viola in the Twenty-First Century: A Sound Recording and Performance Guide of Peter Dayton’s *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, Christopher Hallum’s *A Day in Monroe County*, and Christopher Lowry’s *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*.”

Date Sent: March 1, 2017

Date Completed: March 1, 2017

Interviewer: Christopher Lowry

Interviewee: Peter Dayton

First of all, thanks so much for agreeing to be a part of this project; it means a lot to be able to feature your music on my CD, and I hope it will serve to be a significant addition to the viola’s repertoire!

Q: Tell me about your musical upbringing, how you started composing, and what led you to this career path.

A: My interest in composition began with two simultaneous events: my introduction to the music of Nobuo Uematsu through the Final Fantasy video game series and my introduction to Finale Notepad through a friend at school. The Final Fantasy piano arrangements helped me learn to read music, and fooling around with Finale stimulated my interest in writing my own music. This was in middle school. In high-school, my interest in piano music introduced me to the music of Debussy, Satie, and Ravel, which then put orchestral music on my radar. I was passionate about art in high-school, visual art, music, and poetry. Of these, I felt I had facility in music and poetry, but no formal musical education, so I went to Vanderbilt University planning to pursue writing. I took a

music class anyway and, after a new classes, I decided to pursue music instead, finally able to put names and terminology to my own personal discoveries.

Q: What are some major events or important pieces in your output? Where does your *Fantasy for Viola and Piano* fall within this?

A: Within what might be termed my "official" corpus of work, the Fantasy was right at the beginning. One of the first pieces I composed once I transferred to the Blair School of Music in the fall of 2009, it was premiered at a student recital, along with "Soupir" for Violin and String Quartet. In my first year, technically as a Arts and Sciences student, I had composed a movement for Piano Trio inspired by Joaquin Turina's work, a piece for Piano Quintet, a short setting of an excerpt from The Wasteland for Soprano and Piano, and a Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano inspired by a series of Joseph Stella paintings and some of Gershwin's idioms. Despite being such an early piece, the Fantasy has been a very popular work, one of my most performed pieces.

Q: Describe our friendship and relationship as professional colleagues, how we met, and what kinds of projects we have collaborated on in the past.

A: I'm trying to remember how we met... was it a composer's forum? If not, it must have been through a composition recital. In general our collaborations have been informal. Living in the Mayfield in 2010-11, lots of informal feedback on each other's works - I

remember giving you a few titles for pieces. You performed the Fantasy with Susan Yang at a Thursday student recital, and then more recently at LSU.

Q: Tell me about your *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*. What inspired the creation of this piece? What composers were you influenced by when writing it?

A: A number of factors were involved in the inspiration. The opening gesture, which becomes significant in the piano accompaniment, was definitely taken from the final movement of Michael Kurek's (my teacher at the time) Viola Sonata. At the time I seem remember listening to a lot of Bernstein - the piece I had just composed previously, *Soupir*, for Violin and String Quartet, which was inspired by Agathon from Bernstein's *Serenade*. Barber's Cello Sonata is probably in there too. The colors of the harmonies in the opening processional piano part were in part inspired by the background colors in a reproduction I owned of Dalí's "Les Elephants."

Q: Describe the harmonic language of the piece.

A: Extended tertian. Most of the main harmonies are either major chords with an added 2nd or minor chords are 9th or 13th chords. I remember the 3/8 section was a particular step for me in exploring denser harmonies: the mixed 3rd and altered extensions.

Q: What do you consider to be the most important aspects of the piece (i.e., rhythm, melodic content, color, etc.)

A: The viola's first melodic statement is the most significant aspect, the form is constructed from these recurrences of this melody. Harmony and rich harmonic color has always been important, and especially when I composed the Fantasy, the main focus of my exploration was on developing more complex, harmonies. Color is written into the line itself as an extension of the instrument's range. Writing a low note on the viola means a throaty color. This could be said to be a development in my own growth away from keyboardistic composition and towards thinking of the instrument's timbre itself.

Q: Your piece is, in a way, the “odd one out” on this CD, as I did not commission or premiere the piece; yet, I have always felt a strong affinity for the piece and feel it is a part of my own personal repertoire. I seem to remember you making a few small revisions to the piece between the premiere and my first performance of it. How do you think the piece has changed since its premiere? Who else has performed it, and how has the piece differed from performance to performance?

A: I think the affinity is natural. You were only the second or third violist I had ever met, and your performance was the first time I work of mine was given a chance to be heard after its premiere. I think it is that choice, the one to maintain a relationship with a work beyond the bare birthing process that exhibits a performer's ownership of the work. In terms of revision, the work has mostly undergone cosmetic alterations - the formatting

and some of the markings have changed, but the rhythmic and pitch content were unaltered.

Q: Given your experience as a pianist, you write for the piano quite idiomatically.

Interestingly enough, the viola writing in this piece is also quite idiomatic; how do you approach writing for both instruments in order to ensure that this is the case?

A: To be fair, apart from a limited number of multi-stops, the viola's part is a single-line with few complicated rhythms and only one high-ranged moment. The function of the viola in this work is as a lyrical instrument, so there is little technical challenge. It is an involved piano part, but it fit within my own skill level as a self-taught pianist.

Personally, it is a challenge to myself to make my piano parts beyond my own ability.

Q: What kind of challenges do you think this piece provides for the performers? How about for the audience?

A: I consider one of the selling points of the piece to be that it presents no particular impediments to a good performance. Within academic circles, the idea of perpetual challenge is incredibly popular. This, however, undercuts one of the most significant functions of classical music throughout its history, consumption by various audiences. The point of this piece is not to challenge adversarially, it is to provide an aesthetic space for contemplation and enjoyment.

Q: For that matter, what kinds of challenges did the piece bring to you from a compositional standpoint?

A: It was a challenge in terms of exploring form outside of formula. At a time when I was still learning the terminology of forms and the different kinds of common practice forms, this was a piece unified by a melodic idea, rather than by the conflict and reconciliation of key areas. Formally, the Viola's melody serves as an *Idée fixe*, unifying the diverse textures and harmonic areas explored in the piece. I remember Pierce Siebers challenging me on this exact point when I showed it to him. The descending series of thirds in the piano part is also a significant recurring element. Maybe a better way to consider the form is a kind of ritornello, though I called it a fantasy because it is NOT a preset form.

Q: The majority of the music on this CD somehow falls somewhere in the spectrum of “Americana pastoralism,” if that makes any sense. Do you think it’s fair to say your piece exhibits some of these characteristics as well? Why or why not?

A: While some of my pieces exhibit what might be called Americana attributes, I feel this particular piece is more European, with French music being the obvious influence: the harmonies are very much out of Ravel's music. Is it pastoral? I suppose if one has to ask, the answer is probably no. Measure 39-44 sounds fairly pastoral. The piece captures a number of different affects, pastoral briefly could be one of them.

Q: Is there anything else I did not ask that you would like to talk about?

A: Thank you!

Thanks again so much for your time and for your wonderful piece! It's really a pleasure to work with you!

Interview Questionnaire

Project: “The Viola in the Twenty-First Century: A Sound Recording and Performance Guide of Peter Dayton’s *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, Christopher Hallum’s *A Day in Monroe County*, and Christopher Lowry’s *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola and Suite for Viola and Piano*.”

Date Sent: March 1, 2017

Date Completed: March 5, 2017

Interviewer: Christopher Lowry

Interviewee: Christopher Hallum

First of all, thanks so much for agreeing to be a part of this project; it means a lot to be able to feature your music on my CD, and I hope it will serve to be a significant addition to the viola’s repertoire!

Q: Tell me about your musical upbringing, education, how you started composing, and what led you to this career path.

A: I started taking piano lessons at the age of eight, and took lessons through junior year of high school before taking a break; I later took up lessons again in college. From the beginning of my musical upbringing, my ear was always much stronger than my ability to read music. Honestly, I mostly faked my ability to read music until much later, in early high school, if I remember correctly. Because of my strong ear, I was drawn to writing little ditties, and started recording my own music in high school. My recording device of choice was a Zoom PS-02, and I used it to record myself on guitar, piano, and even some basic vocal tracks. I had a blast with the PS-02, but eventually graduated to GarageBand when I bought my first Apple computer for college, an iBook G4.

I started at Middle Tennessee State University in fall 2004 as an Intended Recording Industry Management major, with an emphasis in production and technology. By that point, I had played a lot in church, had been in several bands, and had even played keyboard on a studio demo for one of these bands. It seemed clear to me at that time that I should continue down the path of learning more about the recording industry. However, as I began to consider the possibility of adding a music minor, my interest in recording industry began to dwindle. I realized that my current major was not really going to feed my desire to learn more about music; instead, the curriculum seemed to focus more on business and the recording aspects of music (not necessarily the creation of it). As I began to prepare for my music minor audition, I took up jazz piano lessons with Bruce Dudley who, at the time, taught jazz piano at MTSU. I also took a theory placement exam to determine whether I could start taking the major-level music theory sequence, and while I did reasonably well on the exam, I didn't quite place high enough to start in Theory I, so I took the Elements of Music course. This ended up being an excellent situation for me, since I really needed a refresher on the basics. I devoured the material, and loved learning the mechanics of music, which I had for so long ignored or dismissed as unimportant. I continued on into Theory I and II, and after a year and a half in college, decided to switch my major to Intended Bachelor of Music with a concentration in Theory and Composition. This was one of the best decisions I have ever made, and have never regretted it; I felt as though I had entered a world where my desire to create music could really be nurtured.

I finished my Bachelor of Music degree at MTSU in August of 2009, and completed my Master's in composition at UT Austin in 2012. After graduate school, I worked for a short time at an Austin tech startup, and then transitioned into almost fulltime work as a private piano/composition teacher at Armstrong Community Music School in Austin. I worked at Armstrong for two years, while also freelancing as a composer and engraver in the Austin, before taking my current job at the University of Georgia as Undergraduate Music Admissions and Recruiting Officer. I love my job at UGA's Hugh Hodgson School of Music for a number of reasons, but the primary reason is this: I work with musicians every day, and get the opportunity to advise prospective students as they consider majoring or minoring in music. The work is incredibly rewarding. I still compose, and I'm even about to start on two new works; a commission for UGA's tuba professor David Zerkel and a new work for concert band, to be premiered by UGA's Concert Band in the fall of 2017.

Q: What are some major events or important pieces in your output? Where does *A Day in Monroe County* fall within this?

A: I wrote a decent number of pieces during my undergraduate years while studying under Paul Osterfield, but many of these were firsts in the various styles, genres, and instrumental combinations for which I wrote them. Like many beginner composition students, I was trying to figure out what I most liked to write.

I would say that there are two pieces from my undergraduate years that, in terms of style, really paved the way for *A Day in Monroe County*. The first is a quartet for violin, viola, horn, and piano, titled *Meditation on a Hymn Tune by W. H. Sims*, which is based on a hymn tune, *Charles*, composed by my great grandfather Walter Hines Sims. The second piece is *A Series of Thoughts and Images* for clarinet and piano. Both of these works fall into the same sort of Americana or pandiatonic style as that of *A Day in Monroe County*.

Incidentally, when you asked me to write *A Day in Monroe County* I was studying composition under Donald Grantham at UT Austin, which is fitting because Don seems to frequently compose music in an Americana style, and for this reason, he was one of the professors whose music attracted me to UT's program in the first place. The only other piece that I have composed since *Monroe County* that most directly fits into the same genre is my Master's thesis, *Chamber Symphony: Wondrous Love*, which is based on the old Sacred Harp tune, *Wondrous Love*. Though I was actually studying with Bruce Pennycook at the time I wrote my Master's thesis, Don Grantham's piece for band, *Southern Harmony* contains a movement titled *Wondrous Love*, which was partly my inspiration for using the tune in my thesis.

Q: Describe our friendship and relationship as professional colleagues, how we met, and what kinds of projects we have collaborated on in the past.

A: We met in church growing up, and played a lot in various praise bands, which I would say comprises the majority of our collaborative projects in the past. We obviously worked

on *A Day in Monroe County* in 2008-9, but this was much later in our friendship. For a more recent example, while not a direct collaboration, our mutual friend Rob Still released a Christmas album a year or two ago, and I know that you helped him with some of the arrangements (and you played on the record, too, correct?). Rob later asked me to do the engraving work for a songbook he put together as a companion to the recording, which was a blast.

Q: I hope this question does not box you in too much, but I remember back when we played on the church praise band together, you always said you didn't see the point in learning how to read music and preferred to just play by ear. Obviously, you ended up learning to read music in order to be able to compose; what changed in your mind to facilitate this?

A: I don't specifically remember saying this, but it sounds like something I would have said in that season of life. I think I was a bit naïve in those days, but going to college was a poignant, eye-opening experience that changed (or started to change) the way I thought about a lot of things.

Q: I have to admit, when I first learned that you had started composing, I was a bit skeptical, since I really only knew you in non-classical settings; but once I heard some of your music, particularly your wind ensemble piece (if I remember correctly, it was called *The Tempest?*), I was thoroughly impressed and knew I had to get a viola piece from you. What were your thoughts when I asked you to write this piece?

A: It's funny that you should ask this now, as I have been tinkering around recently with the idea of revising *Tempest*. This was my first piece for large ensemble, and it was particularly scary to branch out and write something on this large a scale for an actual reading session with the MTSU Wind Ensemble, but I think it opened a number of doors for me (your commission of *A Day in Monroe County* and graduate school opportunities, to name two examples).

When you asked me to write *A Day in Monroe County*, I don't remember my exact thoughts, but I probably felt a little nervous since writing for strings can be tricky; on the other hand, I'm sure that I also felt really good about it, because I know you're a great violist, and getting a good performance is always a major plus for a composer.

Q: Tell me about *A Day in Monroe County*. What inspired the creation of this piece? What composers were you influenced by when writing it?

A: I'll borrow some from my program notes to answer this question:

A Day in Monroe County is based loosely on memories of my childhood. Monroe County is in South Alabama, and its largest city is Monroeville. Monroeville is where I travelled almost every year for family reunions as a child. It is also where author Harper Lee grew up. Interestingly, although I did read Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I think it was more specifically my exposure to the 1962 film adaptation of the book that most strongly influenced my childhood memories of Monroeville.

While writing the piece, I remember listening to a number of different viola pieces, but the one that sticks out the most in my mind is Shostakovich's Sonata, Op. 147.

Q: Describe the harmonic language of the piece.

A: *A Day in Monroe County* is written primarily in a sort of pandiatonic style, and to be honest, I wasn't thinking much about harmonic language while I was writing it. It was composed in a sort of stream of consciousness way, and is meant to take the listener through various short scenes, as though they are being recalled after the fact.

Q: What do you consider to be the most important aspects of the piece (i.e., rhythm, melodic content, color, etc.)

A: I think one of the most striking features of the work is its opening, which is meant to give the sense of floating out of time without much sense of forward motion. The bitonality of the opening also lends to its dreamlike other-worldly sound.

I would say that most salient overall feature of the work is how quiet it is. There are louder moments, yes, but to really be played well, both performers must not get too carried away with louder dynamics.

Q: How do you think the piece has changed since its premiere? Who else has performed it, and how has the piece differed from performance to performance?

A: Honestly, the piece has not changed much since its premiere, and it has not been revised, but it has been performed a number of times since its premiere at Vanderbilt on February 11, 2011. It was performed several times by violist Laura Jesson, who gave the piece's Texas premiere in Austin on November 2, 2011, and it was later selected for performance at Indiana State University's Contemporary Music Festival—Jacob Tews was the violist who performed it—on October 24, 2014.

Q: Given your experience as a pianist, you write for the piano quite idiomatically. Interestingly enough, the viola writing in this piece is also quite idiomatic; how do you approach writing for both instruments in order to ensure that this is the case?

A: I tend to check with performers frequently when writing a piece for an instrument that I do not play, though, I don't remember whether I did this with you for *Monroe County*. Laura Jesson (the UT Student who premiered the piece in Austin) lived on the first floor of the same big house that I lived in during graduate school, and though I do not recall specifically doing this, I probably showed her some examples while writing it. Otherwise, I'm always checking and double-checking orchestration books, and imagining playing the piece (as best I can) to ensure that parts are as idiomatic to the instrument(s) as possible. The piano part for *Monroe County* (as well as much of the viola part) was written at a piano in one of the practice rooms on the fifth floor of the Butler School of Music.

Q: What kind of challenges do you think this piece provides for the performers? How about for the audience?

A: I think one of the challenges with a good number of my pieces is striking a balance between letting the piece breathe (resisting the temptation to go too quickly through certain sections), and, especially during moments where there is repetitive material, not getting too lulled into a pattern to the point where bars are miscounted. There is not quite as much of this with *Monroe County*; however, though the piece looks fairly simple at first glance, it's not as sight-readable as it may seem, and a good performance requires focused preparation and collaboration between both violist and pianist.

The audience may have a little less work to do, though I am not sure how well the meaning of the piece will be conveyed to listeners who are unfamiliar with Harper Lee's work or Americana in general.

Q: For that matter, what kinds of challenges did the piece bring to you from a compositional standpoint?

A: The main challenge I encountered with this piece was resisting the temptation to make it more than it needed to be. Writing fewer notes can be a really good thing!

Q: The majority of the music on this CD somehow falls somewhere in the spectrum of “Americana pastoralism,” if that makes any sense. In your own opinion, is this a fair description of your piece? Why or why not?

A: Yes, I think this is a fair description of my piece. *Monroe County* certainly fits into the tradition of Americana music, and though I had not really thought of it as a pastoral work, I think this an accurate way to think of it; its meaning really is intended to be felt, almost more so than intellectually understood.

Q: Is there anything else I did not ask that you would like to talk about?

A: I think you covered everything!

Thanks again so much for your time and for your wonderful piece! It’s really a pleasure to work with you!

Interview Questionnaire

Project: “The Viola in the Twenty-First Century: A Sound Recording and Performance Guide of Peter Dayton’s *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, Christopher Hallum’s *A Day in Monroe County*, and Christopher Lowry’s *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola and Suite for Viola and Piano*.”

Date Sent: March 2, 2017

Date Completed: March 8, 2017

Interviewer: Perla Fernandez

Interviewee: Christopher Lowry

Q: What made you decide to take on this project? What things have you learned in the process?

A: Ever since I got serious about playing the viola, I have always been obsessive about listening to recordings of my performances, sometimes the same night they occur. Some friends used to make fun of me for that, but I always enjoyed it on some level—the idea of recording something, regardless of how well it goes, is fascinating to me. It didn’t take me long to realize I wanted to be a recording artist in some capacity. Of course, growing up in Nashville doing the multi-instrumentalist and multi-genre thing led me to a good amount of recording studio experience, but it never really involved my so-called “classical chops.” I think my first actual classical recording experience was playing in the orchestra for Dennis Parker’s “Mozart of Cello?” CD back in 2012, which was closely followed by the LSU Symphony’s recording of the Walter Burle-Marx Cello Concerto with Dennis. The first solo recording experience I had was playing Dinos Constantinides’s *Grecian Variations* with the Louisiana Sinfonietta last April, which was released on a CD on Magni Publications back in the fall. Bill Kelley recorded the soundcheck and the concert, and I had recorded the dress rehearsal; I did all the splicing and editing to make the recording sound as good as possible. I did the same thing with

Dinos's *Assemblages II* that I just played with the Sinfonietta in January—this recording will be featured in the future on a CD of Dinos's viola works. The amazing thing is how good the recording sounds given that it's with just one microphone (granted, a very high-quality stereo mic, but still).

Despite the painstaking process of recording, I have always somehow enjoyed it, partly maybe because of knowing that you can combine the best parts of different takes to make an even better end result. The kind of attention to detail that I had to develop in order to make sure I could hyper focus on immediately improving whatever I messed up on the previous take is what made this possible in so few takes (basically three full takes for both of the aforementioned Constantinides pieces). I can't think of a single thing I have done that has allowed me to improve so much as a player than recording so much. The composer side of me of course has also always been drawn to idea of expanding the rather limited repertoire of the viola, so therefore the idea of recording a full length CD of "world premiere recordings" has always been attractive to me.

The initial seed of this project probably was more of a subliminal idea during undergrad than anything else—I had already starting accruing a list of new pieces that I felt deserved to be heard by a wider audience. During my first year of Masters studies at LSU, I had decided it was time to start planning for my first CD, and I knew this was the direction I wanted to go in, not to mention I knew it would be the perfect project for a doctoral dissertation, despite being incredibly ambitious. My experience with audio editing actually came more from working with samples in order to create mock-ups of my

compositions, mix arrangements of various songs or hymns, or even just to patch up small home recording projects. I had no doubt I could handle the post-production side of a project like, but I had very little experience with the actual recording side (at least doing it by myself). Luckily, last year, I was assigned an LSU Recording Studio assistantship, which gave me the skills, as well as access to the equipment, that I needed in order to bring this to fruition. My first experience actually engineering the recording process (not counting doing archival recital recording) was for Elias's CD last summer of all 24 Paganini Caprices on viola; the process of setting up, recording, and editing everything definitely was a huge step forward in my understanding and ability to take on this project.

Basically, one of the most important aspects of this, besides the documentation of new quality pieces, is the fact that I'm doing this all by myself—I am in some cases the composer, the performer, the recording engineer, the mixing engineer, and the producer all at the same time. This is a highly impractical and time-intensive thing to manage, but I have grown so much in the past few weeks of recording and editing. I don't expect to change the world through this project, but I do want to prove a point and address something that I consider to be an issue—the self-recording and home studio craze has affected almost every genre of music but has not yet truly affected the classical industry. How many classical musicians do you know that also engineer and mix their own projects? Not many, I'd venture a guess...

Classical music is so often viewed as elitist and inaccessible to the common listener, and, in a way, I feel that the recording industry side of things doesn't help this to change. It's

also quite possible that classical musicians as a whole have less knowledge of musical technology because it isn't as integral to the craft as it is to many other genres. Of course, recording a classical record in a carpeted basement with a few cheap microphones will provide quite unpleasant results, so in a way, it's not so much about doing everything at home—this whole CD was recorded in the Recital Hall at LSU, after all. But, the point is that it is not outside of the realm of reason or possibility to do everything yourself.

Of course, planning something like this is easier said than done, and the time it actually took to pull everything and everybody together. Probably the biggest thing I have taken away from this, aside from my inevitable musical growth through the process, is a better understanding of the time, organization, and planning needed to make this work in such a small amount of time.

Q: How did you choose the specific composers and pieces for this project?

A: It was actually difficult to narrow down to the specific pieces I ended up recording mainly because I had a large list of pieces I wanted to record, and since a standard CD can only hold up to 80 minutes of music (or sometimes only 74), it limited my options. I of course wanted to feature the two pieces of mine because of their importance for me and their potential interest in the viola community, but aside from that, I had a longer list. Trey's piece was an obvious choice just because I was struck with it the first time I heard it and I ended up performing it twice in recital at Blair. It wasn't written specifically for me, and I did not give the first performance, but somehow I have always felt like it is "my piece" in terms of my relation to it in performance. As for Chris Hallum's piece, I

commissioned it, and when I received the music, I knew it needed to be recorded well (meaning, better than just a live performance recording), so it was in my original plans as well. I originally was hoping to include another large-scale work on the CD—a sonata I commissioned from my friend Sean Calhoun. It’s a wonderful piece in nine movements featuring many different techniques and compositional styles. I was very excited to feature this piece as well, but after editing the rest of the pieces I had recorded, I realized that I didn’t have enough “disk time” to fit a piece of that magnitude along with everything else. Since I had already recorded everything else and had not had time to record the Calhoun yet, I decided it would be best to postpone it for a future project.

Luckily, even without Sean’s piece, the CD is still quite well balanced, with every piece having a certain degree of continuity from one to the next—yes, they are all in different styles, but nothing feels out of place. The whole project makes a good case for a new outlook on the modern viola repertoire, if that makes any sense. I was hoping for an overall theme that falls somewhere between the Americana and Pastoral sound worlds, and although not everything can be strictly identified under these terms, I think all the music gives off some degree of that vibe. It’s nice, as I feel most viola music is a bit more obscure, and this CD might be accessible to a broader audience.

Q: Tell me a bit about each composer and piece and why they are important to you. What kinds of musical attributes do these pieces exhibit, and how might they compare and/or contrast?

A: Trey Dayton was one of my closest friends during undergrad; we met through our mutual friend Emma Dansak, who actually was the violist that gave the premiere of the *Fantasy* that I recorded for this CD, and we became fast friends, musical colleagues, and eventually suitemates. From the first moment I heard of his music (which I believe might have actually been the *Fantasy* or perhaps a shorter piano work), I was struck by the maturity not only of melody and harmony, but particularly of color. There is never a “pale” moment in his music, unless that’s a color he specifically wants from the piece, if that makes sense. Over time, we have given each other a lot of feedback on each other’s pieces and general ideas, which has always promoted my own musical growth.

The *Fantasy for Viola and Piano* was one of his first pieces he wrote for composition lessons, and I heard its premiere in late 2009 (if I remember correctly, it was on the same concert as the premiere of the last movement of my *Suite for Viola and Piano* that I also recorded for this CD) by Emma Dansak with the composer at the piano. I knew I wanted to play the piece as well, but I didn’t get around to it until April 25, 2011, when I played it on my second senior recital. I was mesmerized by the harmonic language as well as, again, the colors, which were often rather precisely notated through articulations or expression markings. I remember during rehearsals before my recital, I worked pretty closely with Trey to make sure the part was notated exactly in a way to tell the player what he wanted while still providing enough freedom of interpretation. Giving that performance, as well as another performance that October, sealed the deal that this piece was important in my repertoire. I find it quite rare for a composer that does not play the viola to write something so well for the instrument (I suppose people say that about

composing for piano and many other instruments as well, but there's something about composing for viola that is inherently different than composing for either cello or violin, and most composers don't get it), but this piece just fits the hand and feels good to play.

Formally, the piece is quite free—it is a “fantasy” after all—but is quite organized by its clear motivic and thematic ideas. The primary motive, being the opening melodic statement in the viola, start out in fourths, temporarily giving the impression of a quartal language; however, the primary harmonic idiom is tertian—not quite rooted in either major or minor. I recall Trey being borderline obsessed with French impressionism at the time, and there is a lot of that influence in this piece. I can also hear a distinctive American sentiment in the music, all but confirmed by an almost direct quote from the Barber *Violin Concerto*.

The viola part is largely in a comfortable middle range, with some lush low writing and one high C at the climax of the piece. The biggest challenge actually is in projecting the sound effectively in the mid range. My viola has a huge low range and a powerful upper range, but, like most violas, the middle range (especially around open D) tends to lack brilliance. It's important to find a way to compensate for this without forcing the sound. Part of what is so effective in this piece is how many colors and different dynamics can be brought out beyond what is explicitly notated, and it takes a great deal of imagination to bring out the full potential of the piece. I chose my dear friend and colleague Daniel Liebeskind to play piano for this piece as well as the Hallum. He had recently played and recorded my solo piano suite *Time Lapse: Five-and-a-Half Reflections on a Tennessee*

Sunset with so much color and sensitivity, and I knew he would be the right person for this job. Recording the piece with him was an absolute blast, and I could not have been happier with the result.

Christopher Hallum and I go way back—we played on the praise bands at church together back in middle and high school, Chris on keyboard and myself usually on percussion but sometimes strings, mandolin, or drum set. Our musical collaborations were pretty much limited to that, which was really hardly a limitation as we were not bound to written music but rather given the freedom to improvise; for that matter Chris played basically entirely by ear, and I think he learned to read music in college. I feel that we always gelled together in this capacity, and we became good friends. I remember a birthday party I threw at my house—I believe I was turning 14 or 15—where one room was dedicated to video games and the next room was a big jam session; we had a drum set and a number of miscellaneous percussion instruments split between three people, an electric guitarist with a big amp, a bassist with a big amp, Chris with his full 88-key keyboard, and his younger brother Daniel playing mandolin, all crammed into a small room playing extremely loudly for like 3 hours. We just played well together. But that was the extent of the musical collaboration until right around the time I started college. Chris is a few years older than I am, so by the time I started college, he had already been at MTSU for probably 3 years, starting in the music technology department but eventually switching to composition. But we stayed friends and were supportive of each other's endeavors; I remember he came to hear the premiere of *Celebration Overture* by the Curb Youth Symphony in December 2006, and he might have been there for the

MTSU Symphony Orchestra's performance of it that following April, though I can't remember for sure. Either way, when I found out he had started composing, I was quite shocked, as I always knew him as being somewhat obstinate when it came to learning to read music. Whatever skepticism I might have harbored was quickly shattered when I heard a few recordings of his works. I was impressed by his melodic gift as well as a sort of lyrical "post-Ivesian" Americana feeling. It didn't take me long to realize I needed to play something of his. I think it was early 2010 that I approached him about writing something that I could play in my junior recital that semester. He actually wrote the piece in enough time that I could have probably learned it for that recital, but I had been struggling significantly with depression that semester, and considering my recital was rescheduled three times—twice because I wasn't ready and once because of the big Nashville flood—by the time I gave the recital, I was so burned out that I couldn't have given an adequate premiere of the piece. Luckily I was able to find a great pianist, Valerie Hsu, to premiere it with me on my senior recital; this performance went very well, despite my A string being noticeably flat, and the video is on YouTube.

When I first got the score to the piece, I listened several times to the MIDI just to get a feel for the meter changes, which sound easy but are actual rather challenging. I loved the harmonic language of the piece, finding it to be quite open, modal, and quartal/quintal. The use of open strings throughout the piece (part of this quintal sound) is certainly a driving motive of the piece, and it reflects the composer's interest in Shostakovich's *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, which, unbeknownst to Hallum at the time, was actually on

my junior recital program. It would have been a perfect pairing, and I hope to actually put the two pieces on a program together some day in the future.

The viola part to this piece is also quite idiomatic; there is a good bit of high writing, but none of it is particularly uncomfortable. The biggest challenge with range is actually sustaining the long held high notes at the beginning while muted. The first few minutes are entirely muted, which poses some problems in projection—not because of volume, but rather because of quality of tone. I made sure to use a mute that would best bring out the color of the piece without taking too much off of the projecting potential of the instrument. In this case, I used an Alpine Mute Co. Artist Mute, which is modeled after the Menuhin Shield Mute but without the brass disc in the center. The result was a more direct-sounding muted tone, with just enough distance to contrast the open viola tone, but enough warmth to not be too striking of a color. Aside from this, the biggest challenge for the player is actually regarding counting; though the piece sounds rather simple metrically, there are several changes between 5/8 and 3/4 with note changes on different beats than what one might expect. Careful care has to be taken to change notes on time without it sounding too “square” or angular (which would be an unfortunately natural result of worrying too much about counting and subdividing). If executed correctly, there is a beautiful musical and harmonic stasis that can be achieved in this piece.

Q: Tell me about your two pieces; where do these pieces fall in your compositional output? Describe the influences found in them, as well as the different techniques, forms, and styles you worked in.

A: I wrote a fair amount of music during undergrad, and I consider every piece to be important in some regard—whenever I hear composers talking about their “major works” versus other pieces, it has never really made sense to me, as every piece I write is some form of step forward for me. But certainly, these two pieces are among the most important of those. The *Suite* is a piece that I still look upon as a particular triumph for several reasons: it was the first large-scale multi-movement piece I actually completed (I had of course been working on and off for years on my Symphony, but even now it remains unfinished), it was the first piece that I had written for composition lessons, and it was the first piece in which I truly attempted to go beyond my level of comfort and understanding tonally and harmonically. Before Fall 2008, the only pieces I had finished were *Celebration Overture* for orchestra, *Love Poem* for viola and harp, *Tranquillo* for mixed chamber ensemble, and my recently completed *Symphonic Dance and Dirge*. I deep-down knew that what I had written was actually good, but I still felt somehow like a poser given that I had never been trained in any capacity of composition. My first semester of lessons that fall, I studied with Michael Kurek, who specializes primarily in a Neo-Romantic idiom, which was what I identified with as well. This was the perfect start for me, as I needed confidence to understand that I could actually be a composer; I think if I had been challenged too much to write outside of my normal style at that point, it would have scared me off from continuing to compose. In my first lesson, Dr. Kurek basically told me that there was no real wrong way to approach the composition process and encouraged me to write in whatever way I was comfortable with. I started drafting the first movement of the *Suite* and bringing it in; it turned out much different than how it

started, as the original opening piano gestures were taken out to be used for a double bass piece (which still hasn't actually been written yet!); the final opening piano gestures were added much later in an effort to motivically set up the fortissimo version of that gesture later in the piece. The harmonic language of this movement is modal and the general style is pastoral. I don't recall what exact pieces I had been listening to at the time, but I know I was heavily influenced by Vaughan Williams's music. It was pretty close to the end of the composition process that I gave the movement its title, "...veiled countryside." The open fourths and fifths are not only motivic to this movement, but they also somehow tie the entire suite together. For the muted section at the end, I used an Alpine Mute Co. Professional Mute, which has the brass disc in the middle; this mute provides a very dark and warm timbre that adds to the "veiled" tone of the movement.

I spent about a month working through the first movement before starting the second movement, "...unencumbered youth," which was a much bigger challenge compositionally. The use of the Lydian mode in this movement aims to emphasize the playfulness and youthfulness already set up by the jaunty rhythms and use of pizzicato. My original performance instructions involved the option for the violist to use a pick, which I did for the first performance; this was partially to help for volume but also I felt it would make articulation of the repeated eighth notes faster than with standard pizzicato. I later took that indication out since I pulled the tempo back a bit, but I ended up adding it again (still optional) for the "recap" section, this time strictly for balance and variety of timbre. This movement was my first experiment in rondo form. The main theme bears a striking resemblance to the third movement of Korngold's violin concerto; though I had

definitely heard the Korngold before, it had been many years prior, therefore making this completely coincidental. In fact, I didn't even realize this until Ben Hart pointed it out to me a few years later!

My planned third movement ended up becoming the fourth movement later. I was planning a “nightmare” movement, and I wanted it to start tonal and become progressively more and more edgy as it progressed. At the time, however, my compositional tools were fairly limited, and this proved to be difficult. This was Spring 2009, and I was studying with Michael Slayton, who basically assigned me to write a short, undeveloped non-tonal piece for viola and piano. Somehow, even without the experience writing non-tonally, I turned out what would become the third movement, “...endless night,” in less than two days. The thematic material is loosely based on the opening motives of the first movement of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*, and the harmonic material, perhaps better described as pan-tonal, was somehow inspired by Paul Hindemith, though not really grounded in his techniques or theory. I also wrote for the violist to (optionally) tune the C string down to a B at the end of the movement, and then the piece ends with the violist bowing the tailpiece—an effect I had been recently exposed to that in this context gives an eerie tone similar to someone sighing or moaning. The mute I chose to use for this movement was the original Menuhin Shield—the first mute I ever owned and have had since I was twelve years old; this mute provides a very dark timbre but still allows for enough projection to not have to fight through the louder dynamics.

I finally managed to finish composing the fourth movement independently that summer. This ternary movement, "...into a shadow," is meant to sound more traditional at first, more dissonant in the middle, and then like a less tonal version of the A section at the end—this was supposed to signify someone trying to fall asleep, having a bad nightmare, and waking up from the nightmare so shaken up that he or she cannot fall back asleep. The somewhat Celtic-inspired A section is in F Dorian and is highly contrapuntal—the best way I can describe it is "Irish Baroque," if that makes sense. It's almost conceived in a somewhat small-scale ritornello form. The middle "nightmare" section is primarily in a sort of C minor pandiatonicism, with liberal use of tritones to add tension and drama to the soundscape. The *sul ponticello* and bowing with the metal coil of the bow also serve to emphasize this tension. The middle section ends with a series of downward glissandi in the viola part (accompanied by a somewhat masked quote from Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphosis*) ending in a loud cluster followed by a grand pause (like the infamous dream of falling down and waking up right before you hit the ground). The A section returns, but the melody undergoes intervallic diminution and augmentation before finally returning to the modal idiom from before. In many ways, this movement is the one I feel shows the most compositional craft and maturity of the whole suite, though I still feel more emotionally attached to the final movement.

The fifth movement, "...peace transcendent," is more than twice the length of any of the other movements, which was not really intentional. I was hoping for a relatively static, peaceful, and simplistic piece, but it evolved into something much more than that. I wrote this while studying with Michael Alec Rose, who transformed the way I thought about

music in ways I can't even describe. Somehow, while working with Dr. Rose on this piece, it transformed into something much more complex and intricate than what I expected. The outer sections in general are more open and calm, but the middle section is much more impassioned and romantic. The harmonic stasis of the beginning gives the impression of windchimes, both through the pentatonic piano part and through the *ad libitum* harmonic glissando on the A string of the viola. This introduction leads into the main theme, which is a very obvious (though, again, unintentional) reflection of the Rebecca Clarke *Sonata for Viola and Piano*, which I was studying at the time. This unabashedly American pastoral scene is interrupted briefly by a viola cadenza, colored by the sympathetic ringing of the piano strings. When I wrote the middle section, I was hesitating to write something in my older Neo-Romantic style for fear of it being labeled as "cheesy." I distinctly remember Dr. Rose saying something to the extent of "My wife and I always buy this cheese called Seriously Sharp Cheddar. I have to tell you Chris, *this* cheese isn't sharp enough!" His encouragement for me to go all the way with this sound allowed me to tap into the emotional issues I had been dealing with—my struggle with bipolar disorder always seems to pervade my music in some way or another, but this time it allowed me to fuel the most passionate music I had written so far. In the program notes, I mention something about how there is a struggle to retain the peace, which might not make sense to everybody, but to me was a very personal struggle. I remember listening to the recording of the premiere of this movement and breaking down crying—it was the moment I realized just how powerfully music can convey your own emotions and struggles. After the climax of the movement, the introductory pentatonic material comes back, this time in A-flat major over a pedal-A ostinato; this was one of my first attempts

at bitonality. The rest of the movement experiments with different harmonic ambiguities until the piece completely modulates to E for the quieted and reverent ending, complete with the use of a metal practice mute to make the viola sound as distant as possible.

The story of *Milestone Miniatures* is a bit funny to me, as it developed in a much different way than the *Suite*. Unlike most of the rest of my output, which had by and large taken months to write, this piece was a last-minute addition to my senior composition recital. A week out from my recital, some of the pieces I had planned on programming for that recital had not panned out, and I also wanted to prove to myself that I could write something quickly and premiere it. Aside from my piano suite, I had never written for anything completely solo, so I was looking forward to the challenge and the freedom. I drafted the first movement and much of the second (at the time, I was planning it would be the third and final movement, with the pizzicato movement being the second movement), and then I came down with a stomach virus and was more or less incapacitated for two days. I recovered a few hours before my recital and was able to draft out enough of the second movement to play that night—I actually ended up improvising a bit in performance based on these sketches, and the final version of the piece was pieced together from both the sketches and the recording from my pseudo-improvisation. The movement titles came much later as well, having just been listed by Roman numerals in the recital program. The rest of the piece was finished almost five years later.

Milestone was named after the idea of musically representing something important that has occurred in my life—in this case, my studies at Blair. I worked on my initial ideas of the piece with Michael Rose, who turned me on to the idea of “Bildungsroman,” which is a literary style essentially based around the idea of coming-of-age in which the protagonist grows through many life-changing events. I wanted to make this piece somehow following in that genre.

The first movement, “Fantasy on ‘B.L.A.I.R.,’” was written in one sitting, if I recall correctly, and was barely revised except to add a few articulation markings later. The musical material consists of various different “musical spellings” of the word “Blair,” which essentially means assigning certain pitch classes to certain letters. I can’t remember all of the permutations of this that I used (I have a sheet somewhere where I sketched a bunch of different possibilities out), but I know I had to be creative to make some of them work. For instance, the main motive is B-flat, A, C, E, and D, which I loosely derived from B=Bflat (from the German notation), L=A (“L” standing for “La”), A=C (since “La” was just used, the repeating A was reset to C), I=C (“I” standing for “Mi” without the “M,” which is a bit of a stretch, but I guess the whole thing is), and R=D (where “R” stands for “Re”). Another instance can be seen in the motive B-flat, A, and E-flat, where B=B-flat, LA=A, and IR=E=flat (where “IR” can be seen as a reverse spelling of “Ri”). I know I used some other techniques, all of which were equally silly and yet provided interesting musical material. Aside from this, one of the most salient features of this movement (or really of the entire piece) is how fragmented it is. As I had basically only written music with two or more instruments, I had always dealt with music

that would flow more; one of the challenges I set for myself with this piece was to discover what could be done with rests and caesuras. I ended up using some different-length pauses in especially the first movement, consisting of a comma for short breath, caesura for normal pause, caesura with fermata for longer pause, and caesura with square fermata for very long pause. I also experimented a lot with varying degrees of vibrato and how to notate that. The general tone of the first movement is actually quite somber, which almost gives off the wrong interpretation; I don't remember who it was, but I remember someone hearing it and asking "Wow, was college really *that* depressing for you?" I thought that was pretty funny.

The second movement, "Fragmented Rhapsody," has undergone the most revision since its initial conception. As a rhapsody, I intended this movement to be a freely flowing, declamatory piece with several different sections. The primary section consists of loud quartal and quintal chords interspersed with hidden quotes from earlier pieces of mine. This contrasts with a lyrical, "carefree" section played *flautando* that derives from the main theme to *Celebration Overture*. This section also uses quotes from various pieces I wrote while at Blair, including my *Concert Fantasy for Trombone and Piano* and even the last movement of my *Suite for Viola and Piano*. The pitch content of these excerpts is largely the same, with just a few alterations, as well as left-hand pizzicato open string punctuations—all of this contributes to the quartal/quintal sound of the movement. One extended technique that is central to this movement is *col legno*, both *battuto* and *tratto*. The sound of the wood of the bow striking the strings, something that I first encountered when playing "Mars: The Bringer of War" from Holst's *Planets* in youth symphony back

in 2000, evokes a feeling a childlike excitement in me (I used it a little bit in the second movement of the *Suite* as well. The use of *tratto*, or bowing with the wood of the bow, is extremely effective in an unaccompanied setting like this, where a true *pianississimo* can be achieved.

The third and fourth movements were partially drafted in the summer of 2012, but most of it was written in early 2016. I wanted some time to pass before finishing the last movement especially, since it was meant to be a way of looking back on my time at Blair after the fact. The third movement, “Homage,” is played with the violist seated and the instrument held in the lap like a mandolin. The entire movement is pizzicato and uses many different timbres and styles of plucking and striking the instrument. The whole movement is held together by a series of dissonant chords, separated by quasi-improvisatory flourishes and interludes. There are two themes used in this movement, the first of which (I’m almost embarrassed to admit) is the Sigma Alpha Iota Chorale, and the second of which is *Annie Lisle* (the tune to the Vanderbilt Alma Mater). The SAI Chorale was something I heard far too often in the hallways at Blair; but, unlike the rest of the songs sung by them and the Phi Mu Alpha guys, I always heard an expressive potential and an almost “Renaissance-esque” vibe to it. My treatment of this melody follows suit and is meant to sound reminiscent of a Renaissance lute. My treatment of the alma mater tune is meant to be a sort of pantonal variation on the theme, which modulates after every phrase. The movement ends with the same opening dissonant chords and a mandolin-style tremolo upward glissando *al niente*; the idea is that the audience shouldn’t be able to discern when the sound actually stops (the player has the option to continue pantomiming

this effect indefinitely after the sound has stopped, hopefully in an effort to draw the audience into listening deeper).

The “Rhapsodic Reprise” uses material from all three previous movements but is mostly based on the material from the second movement. After a loose and scattered opening, the piece begins to take shape again when the chords from the second movement come back in a *bariolage* string crossing passage which accelerates and builds in intensity until the climax; the player is instructed to begin bouncing the bow stroke at some point (like in Paganini’s *Caprice No. 1* or at the end of the cadenza from the first movement of Mendelssohn’s *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in E Minor*) and then smooth it back out whenever the player feels like. The climax of the piece is followed by an elaborated whole-tone transition to the coda of the piece, which ends *fortissississimo*, followed by an extra long fermata rest, which the player should observe as a dramatic visual effect (granted, the audience might start applauding immediately, which would ruin this effect).

Q: What is the history of your pieces in terms of performances, by yourself or otherwise, and how have the pieces changed over time?

A: Interestingly, I actually had the privilege of *not* premiering the first movement of the *Suite*. Before I had even finished the original version of it, I had decided I wanted to actually listen to a performance of it just to see how someone else would approach playing it. The first performance (November 12, 2008) was in a Blair Composers Forum concert, and it was premiered by my colleagues Jim Larson on viola and Dean Whiteside on piano. They did a great job with it, and it helped me understand better how to notate

certain articulations and tempos based on what I hear in my head. I gave the second performance, along with the premiere of the second movement (both of which have been extended and revised) on my sophomore recital on March 14, 2009, with Polly Brecht on piano; I believe the next performance of any of the movements was on November 9, 2009, at a Blair Living Sounds Concert, where I premiered the fifth movement with Jennifer McGuire on piano. I played the first and third in the MTNA Solo Competition at the Regional Level (at Samford University in Alabama) in early 2010, and I think that was basically it until I revised the piece for my senior composition recital, on November 11, 2011. This performance was the official premiere of the fourth movement, thereby marking the first performance of the entire suite. I had significantly simplified the piano part by this point in attempt to make it more accessible, but to no avail. The performance on my recital was such a disaster, I actually considered withdrawing the piece completely, as I could not simplify the piano part any further without sacrificing the actual musical content. The other revisions included small piano interludes in both the first and second movements and some cleaned up articulation notation. Before this recording project, I revisited everything just to make sure I had it as clean and idiomatic as possible; aside from that, I didn't change much (other than adding a piano pedal resonance section to a viola cadenza in the fifth movement). Luckily, I picked a great pianist (Zih Yun) for this project who actually took it seriously and practiced it very hard. I'm so happy with how the recording turned out, and I'm looking forward to our performance on March 16!

As for *Milestone*, I premiered the first two movements in some capacity in my senior composition recital and then played them in various small house concerts or sorts; my colleague Rachyl Duffy gave a performance of those two movements at a retirement home in Philadelphia as well. After I finished the whole piece, I premiered it in an LSU Composer's Forum on April 19, 2016, and then gave multiple performances of it in Naolinco and Puebla, Mexico, last summer. I mentioned before that various changes were made to the piece over time, but perhaps the biggest change that was made after the fact was a cosmetic one; engraving the piece in Sibelius was a daunting task, as non-metered music is not particularly intuitive to write into a program like that. Nonetheless, I made it work, and I considered this to be a particular "milestone" in and of itself, as the piece ended up looking like a work of art on paper as well.

Q: What compositional challenges did you face when writing the pieces, and how might that have been different than you anticipated?

A: Oh boy, where do I even start? I always have music in my head, and I always am working on ideas, but the actual composition is never truly easy for me, per se. I always face challenges, usually related to development and transitions. The biggest challenge for me with the *Suite* was writing well for the piano, honestly. I feel it happened in some capacity, but it was like pulling teeth composing a part that fit my ideas and also fit the instrument. Other than that, perhaps the biggest challenge was making the fourth movement work; the extended tonality and clashing dissonances were things that I had so little experience with at the time, and struggling to make it work in a way I was comfortable with was a massive learning experience. As mentioned before, the fourth

movement was originally meant to be the third, and Dr. Slayton recommended me to write something else in between the second and the fourth in order to give me more experience with the non-tonal or pan-tonal atmospheres. It was either him or Dr. Kurek that told me once that if you're struggling too much to write a piece, then maybe you're writing the wrong piece. It took me awhile to realize I was writing the wrong piece for the time, and once I had gotten a bit more comfortable with an expanded harmonic language, it was finally the right time to compose it. The biggest challenge in *Milestone* was really just writing something free and spontaneous that made musical sense; the engraving process was also mind-boggling. It always takes hours upon hours to engrave music well, and that's usually when working with standard notation and meters/barlines; this was a completely new challenge, involving creating custom time signatures and hiding them along with the barlines in order to create the illusion of non-metered music.

Q: What inherent challenges exist for the performers in your pieces? How do they compare to the other composers' pieces in difficulty?

A: The biggest challenge in my music is probably the piano part for the *Suite*. I am not a pianist, and I have a difficult time visualizing what is or isn't idiomatic for the instrument. I usually try to show ideas of what I'm working on to pianists to get their feedback, but I didn't do that originally in this piece. One of the biggest issues I had until very recently was that, with the exception of the first, third, and fifth movements, I had never gotten good performances of the piece, because no pianist would take it seriously enough to actually do a decent job with the piece. It was nice to see Zih Yun prove that the part is actually possible! The viola part for the suite has some challenges of its own,

including a few extended high passages, particularly in the last movement, as well as some difficult double stops and fast runs in the fourth movement. For *Milestone*, the biggest challenge for the violist is pacing and interpretation. Due to the non-metered writing, there is a great deal of inherent freedom needed to pull off the first and third movements in particular. The biggest challenge in the first movement is bow control, especially on the long notes with the hairpins and changes in vibrato intensity. To be sure, the third movement will provide a significant challenge for any violist that is not experienced in playing an instrument such as mandolin, banjo, or guitar. Even if a player is experienced with this, there are a variety of pizzicato techniques and effects that the player has to experiment with—this movement is for that reason probably the hardest to pull off effectively. The fourth movement has a few tricky chords, and the *bariolage* section in the middle provided more of a challenge for myself than I would have expected. The other two pieces on the CD are so idiomatically conceived for both instruments that it's difficult to compare them. For sure, both Hallum and Dayton write more naturally for the piano than I do, given that they are both pianists.

Q: Tell me about the recording and editing process. Why did you decide to do everything more or less by yourself? What challenges did you face in this, both for recording and in post?

A: As I mentioned before, I wanted to do the whole thing by myself since I knew I had the skills to do it and wanted to show that it was possible, even if entirely impractical. But I'm glad I did it, and I feel like I could do it again in a heartbeat. The actual process was interesting in that I didn't have much of a chance to actually soundcheck the first time—

the first “session” was the February 6 Composers Forum concert that Daniel and I played Hallum and Dayton on. I set up the additional mics and set approximate levels for them but didn’t get a chance to actually check them before the concert. By some miracle, the levels were absolutely perfect for the two pieces I played, and the piano mic ended up clipping and distorting for everything else. How I managed to set it so perfectly just for those pieces is completely beyond me, but I was so inspired after that knowing that I had figured out the perfect set up for this project.

The primary mic that hangs in the recital hall is an old AKG c422, which is sadly no longer manufactured. It’s an amazing stereo dual-diaphragm microphone that, although never an industry standard of classical recording, seemed to have enjoyed a sort of vogue for archival recordings, as evidenced by its use in Carnegie Hall, as well as I believe in the halls at Manhattan School of Music and Middle TN State University (if my memory serves me correctly). One of the diaphragms of the microphone can be rotated and changed to either cardioid or figure-eight in order to allow for either recording in XY or in Mid-Side. Bill Kelley always uses the mic in Mid-Side, which I think is the ideal sound for that hall, as well as for providing a nice variable stereo image. The nice thing about recording in MS rather than using two separate microphones in a stereo pair is that it keeps the image centered—since the violist will normally stand slightly left of center of the stage in order to facilitate communication with the pianist, a stereo pair will essentially “show” the location of the violist, whereas the MS pair will keep the violist centered (in this case, widening the image won’t truly “move” the violist but will serve to enhance the perceived stereo field itself and add reverberance).

The other microphones I chose were an AKG c414 set to cardioid for the viola and a Rode NT4 stereo microphone for the piano. I set the 414 up about three feet away from the viola at roughly the same height as the F-holes. This added an appropriate amount of dry sound and control to the viola. Miking the piano was a more complicated process. Of course, from the pianist's perspective, the lowest notes will sound more to the left and the highest to the right; there are many ways to mic a piano, but usually some form of stereo technique to simulate this perspective is used, which in some ways is good but in some ways gives an "inaccurate" representation of what is heard in the hall. If anything, an audience member would perceive the high notes as being closer to them and the low ones farther away, though in most cases the entire range of the piano would probably be sensed as coming from one place, if that makes sense. The choice to use the NT4 on the piano was clear to me, as the dual-diaphragm configuration made the set-up easy and clean, and the XY position allows for a definite stereo image that is wide enough to be noticeable but narrow enough to prevent the aforementioned "inaccurate" representation. Close-miking the piano allows more control over the attack and definition of the sound, while most of the tone still comes from the room mic as well as some spill into the viola mic.

Everything was recorded in 24-bit/44.1 kHz on ProTools on the Mac Pro in the recording studio. The tracks were then moved to my computers and edited/mixed in Logic Pro X. From the editing perspective, there is not a great deal of "post-processing" to be done, other than to decrease the bass hum of the air conditioning, and to reduce a bit of the

harshness of the close mics, both through equalization and adding reverb. I panned the viola directly to the center, panned the piano about 50% left and right, and widened out the MS room mic about 80% in order to provide more ambience as well as a larger stereo field. The actual mix changes from piece to piece, but in general I keep the viola quite present in the mix and the room a little less than this; I bring the piano up and down in the mix to add definition whenever it is needed, but I find too much of it in the mix becomes pretty overpowering. In terms of splicing between takes...well, I'd rather not give too much away on that front!

The biggest annoyance of doing everything myself was the actual recording process itself. Getting to the recording studio from the hall involves walking out to the lobby and walking up the stairs to the studio, which overlooks the recital hall from behind the audience. I would have to hit the record button from there, and then run back down the stairs to get back to hall, play, and then run back up to stop the recording. Other than just being slightly annoying, the main issue with this is that there is no one up there to monitor the recording process. Ideally, nothing should change if everything is set right, but there is always that one time that things don't go as planned. For instance, during one recording session, the computer crashed, deleting over an hour of takes (to make matters worse, this was in the fourth movement of the *Suite*, which is one of the hardest to play for both instruments); this was one of the points that made me realize the seeming futility of this project. Another annoying aspect is just the amount of time it takes to get enough good takes in a session as well as how much time it takes to edit. To be fair, this would be the case regardless of whether the project is self-engineered or professionally produced.

But, just to give an idea: I recorded the Dayton and Hallum pieces on February 9 and 11, the *Milestone Miniatures* on February 12 and 15, and the *Suite for Viola and Piano* on February 13, 17, 18, and 24. Based on the information from the recorded tracks, there was a total of 10 hours, 41 minutes, and 31 seconds of time spent recording in the hall. There is no real way for me to measure the amount of time that was spent editing, but given that I had to listen through to everything that had already been recorded multiple times in order to figure out which takes to use, a safe estimate is at least three times the amount of recording time. The scope of this is completely ridiculous and unreasonable for a full-time student to complete in under a month, which is what makes this so ambitious; I'm unbelievably proud that I was able to pull this off.

Q: What do you hope to achieve through this project?

A: I'd really like this CD to help broaden the standard repertoire of the viola. It's still "trendy" to write for the instrument, and so much music is being written for it now, but I strongly believe that every piece on this CD is great and worth being played and recorded multiple times. I am already planning "Volume 2" of the series, and I hope to continue many volumes beyond that!

Q: Anything else?

A: I think that just about covers it!

APPENDIX B: LETTERS OF PERMISSION FROM COMPOSERS

March 7, 2017

Christopher D. Lowry DMA Candidate Louisiana State University

Dear Chris,

I, Peter Dayton, Composer of "Fantasy, for Viola and Piano," (SCORE) published 2009 by Peter Dayton Music (ASCAP), hereby give permission to Christopher Lowry to reproduce the SCORE in parts, but not in whole, for the purposes of his doctoral dissertation.

Peter N. Dayton

March 7, 2017

Christopher D. Lowry
DMA Candidate
Louisiana State University

Dear Chris,

I am writing to grant you permission to use excerpts from my piece *A Day in Monroe County* in your dissertation document "The Viola in the Twenty-First Century: A Sound Recording and Performance Guide of Peter Dayton's *Fantasy for Viola and Piano*, Christopher Hallum's *A Day in Monroe County*, and Christopher Lowry's *Milestone Miniatures for Solo Viola* and *Suite for Viola and Piano*." I am delighted that you intend to use my music on this project.

The registered publisher for *A Day in Monroe County* is Buddy or Melvin (ASCAP).

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Challum", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Christopher D. Hallum

APPENDIX C: HANDWRITTEN SKETCHES OF MILESTONE MINIATURES

- Milestone Miniatures -
Set I
for Solo Viola

CHRISTOPHER LOWRY

I.

Very Slow
N.V. mmmmm (N.V.) // poco vib.
p mf pp
con vib. N.V. sul tasto
mp
towards bridge P (misterioso) V ord. sul G
P (transparent) 2
Zresc. (with increasing intensity) 3 (7) 3 (7) 3 (7) arco
N.V. starkly (ord.) mf f toward bridge pont. toward fingerboard (pont.) tasto
Lmp n ppp
pont. pp
quadruple whole note

tud. bridge →

Draft 1

- Milestone Miniatures -
Set I
For Solo Viola

Christopher YOUNG

Fast-ish

I (or III ... or IV)?

this is later

Piu Mosso - Pant. NO! Col legno tratto

Slow col legno

poco a poco accel...

ord.

arco

battuto

later (B)

A tempo (Tempo I)

(Milestone 3-2)

[Vrati]

C. Con

Handwritten musical score on four staves. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Annotations include "ad lib.", "p-bow staccato", "(B)", "gliss!", "etc.", and "NON HARMONIC". The score ends with a double bar line and the number 113.

Six empty musical staves for notation.



Draft I

Handwritten musical notation for Draft I, measures 1-12. The notation is written on three staves. The first staff contains measures 1-4, the second staff contains measures 5-8, and the third staff contains measures 9-12. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p*, *f*, and *sfz*. There are also some handwritten annotations and a large 'X' mark at the end of the section.

III - DRAFT 2 (12/6/11)

Handwritten musical notation for Draft 2, measures 1-8. The notation is written on two staves. The first staff contains measures 1-4, and the second staff contains measures 5-8. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf*. There are also some handwritten annotations and a large 'X' mark at the end of the section.

Handwritten musical notation for Draft 2, measures 9-16. The notation is written on two staves. The first staff contains measures 9-12, and the second staff contains measures 13-16. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf*. There are also some handwritten annotations and a large 'X' mark at the end of the section.

Handwritten musical notation for Draft 2, measures 17-24. The notation is written on two staves. The first staff contains measures 17-20, and the second staff contains measures 21-24. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mp*. There are also some handwritten annotations and a large 'X' mark at the end of the section.

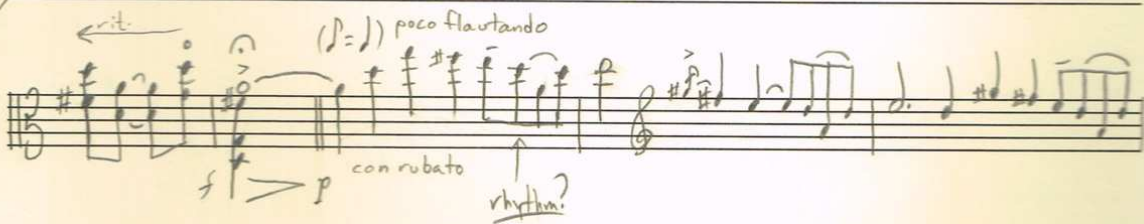
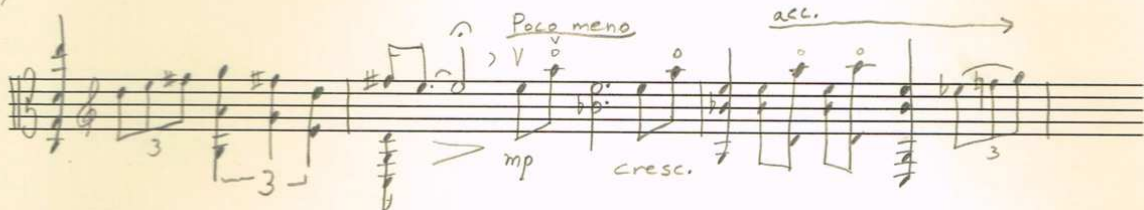
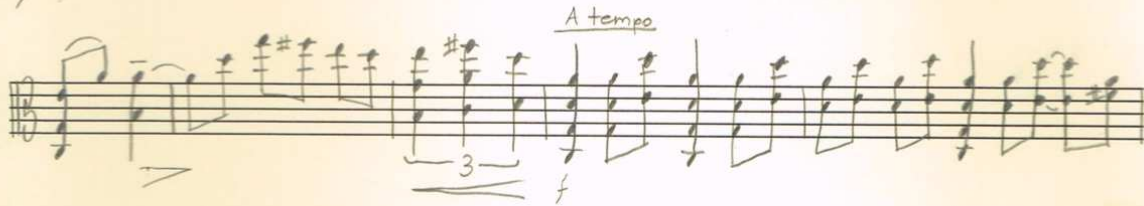
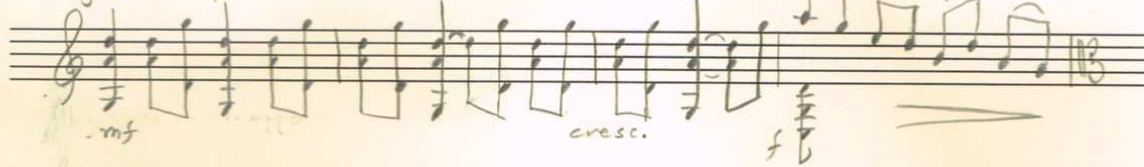


Milestone Miniatures

Christopher Lowmy

Allegro non troppo

II.



II. - 2

C. Lowry

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a double bar line with a repeat sign, a *sul pont.* marking, a *pp* dynamic marking, and a *poco cresc.* marking. There are also *mf* markings and triplet markings (3). The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a *mf* marking, an *↑* marking with the text "(insert L.H. pizz?)", a *p* marking, and a *← (ditto)* marking. There are also triplet markings (3). The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a *3* marking, a *2* marking, a *(arco)* marking, and a *tr.* marking. There are also *+* markings and a *n* marking. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a *tratto* marking, a *pp* marking, a *(sempre tratto)* marking, and a *ppp* marking. There are also *3* markings and a *n* marking. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Handwritten musical notation on a single staff. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The notation includes a *rit.* marking, a *arco* marking, and a *ord* marking. There are also *3* markings and a *n* marking. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.



II. - 3

C. Lowmy

Poco Adagio *acc. poco a poco* *arco*

battuto

p cresc. poco a poco

mp cresc.

pizz *arco* *tasto* *pizz* *battuto*

slow roll

FIN.

etc.

gradually change from harmonic to natural

3-12-12
Sempere
Pizz.
Jagged
Milestone Miniatures
Vol. I
-III Anthem(?) - [Tribute?]
Chapman
Baker

mp
f
p
mf
pizz.
metallic
tram-thu gliss
More
Re
No pause
f interotto
(softly brush)

3-12-12

Milestone Miniatures

Set I.

IV. Repose

bow behind finger

Chilgo

Leisurely

mf rich

Tailpiece

mp

mp

3

ff

mp

behind

ord

f

sim.

mf

accol.

ad lib.

to ord.

gradually begins bounce stroke

sim

molto rit

cresc.

ff

(NON QUINTUPLET)

molto rit

cresc.

ff

ff

APPENDIX D: SCORE TO MILESTONE MINIATURES

Milestone Miniatures
Set I

For Solo Viola

Christopher Lowry

Opus 13

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- I. Fantasy on "B.L.A.I.R." - 3'40"
- II. Fragmented Rhapsody - 3'30"
- III. Homage - 3'30"
- IV. Rhapsodic Reprise - 2'50"

TOTAL DURATION: Approximately 13'

ABOUT THE PIECE:

I have often wondered what I will look back on late in life and remember as being particularly significant. I am currently too young to know what important events will happen in my life, but I do feel that there have already been many monumental moments over these 27 years that have shaped me into who I am today. I have begun writing a set of short pieces for solo viola, crafted loosely after the literary tradition of "Bildungsroman"—essentially the growth of a protagonist through many life-changing events—that reflect my feelings on these events, hence the name *Milestone Miniatures*. I'm sure this will be an ongoing project, and I will continue writing sets of miniatures as I grow and mature.

The first set of miniatures, in four movements, centers around my life as a student at Vanderbilt University's Blair School of Music, where I completed my undergraduate degree as well as many years of precollege studies. The first movement is very wistful in style and is built on many different musical "spellings" of the word "Blair." The second movement contrasts the fiercely rhythmic with the flowing lyrical. A rhapsody in the traditional sense of the word, this movement includes many quotations from earlier pieces in my oeuvre. The third movement is entirely pizzicato (the player is instructed to play *quasi guitarra*, with the instrument resting in the lap) and is based on different themes heard while at Vanderbilt. The final movement is a way of looking back at my experience at Vanderbilt after having graduated; this movement recaps and recycles much of the material from the previous movements. As this set of pieces reflects my experiences as a Blair student, it is dedicated to the Blair School—both the college and precollege programs—with a special nod to the viola and composition departments.

PERFORMANCE INSTRUCTIONS:

- In non-metered sections, accidentals apply only to the note they immediately precede (with the exception of repeated notes of the same pitch). Natural signs will still be used to avoid confusion.

- Given the lack of written meter, rhythms are relative and should be taken as literally as the player feels they should be taken; tasteful rubato is always welcome. The difference in each note value should still be made as apparent as possible within this construct.

,	//	⸘	⏏
Short Breath	Normal Pause	Long Pause	Extra Long Pause


(s) <i>p</i>	(s) <i>mp</i>	(s) <i>mf</i>	(s) <i>f</i>	(s) <i>ff</i>
--------------	---------------	---------------	--------------	---------------

Subito Dynamics



Diminuendo al niente

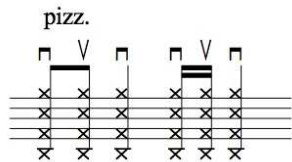
NOTATION KEY

N.V. —→ V. —→ N.V.


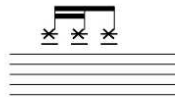
Start non vibrato, gradually add and increase vibrato (usually along with a crescendo), and then gradually decrease until non vibrato.



Gradually speed up and slow down, respectively.



Pitchless percussive strumming. Dampen all four strings with left hand and strum aggressively!



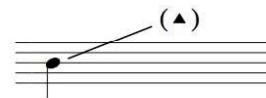
Drum on body of instrument.



Pluck only the first note; the notes under the slur should be articulated strongly by left hand "hammer ons" without re-articulating with the right hand.



Pluck either with fingernail or with a plectrum, preferably closer to the bridge.



Gliss to the highest possible sounding note.

Milestone Miniatures

I. Fantasy on "B.L.A.I.R."

Very Slow; Con Rubato

(♩=ca.42)

Set I; Opus 13
CHRISTOPHER LOWRY (b. 1988)

The musical score consists of ten staves of music. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 12/8. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *ppp*, and *fff*. Performance instructions include *con vib.*, *poco vib.*, *con vib.*, *gliss.*, *stark*, *ord.*, *sul G*, *sul D*, *sul ponticello*, *sul pont.*, *sul G*, *sul D*, *sul tasto*, *towards bridge*, *towards fingerboard*, *arco*, and *rit.*. The score also includes tempo markings: *Very Slow; Con Rubato*, *accel. with increasing intensity*, *rit.*, and *a tempo*. The score is marked with repeat signs and includes a double bar line at the end of the piece.

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II. Fragmented Rhapsody

Moderately Fast (♩=ca.112)

The musical score consists of six staves of music. The first staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a *mf* dynamic and a crescendo leading to a *f* dynamic. The second staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature. It includes markings for *rit.*, *a tempo*, and dynamics *mf*, *mp*, and *f*. The third staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature. It includes markings for *Poco meno mosso*, *accel.*, *p*, *mp*, *cresc.*, and *mf*. The fourth staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature. It includes markings for *f*, *Tempo I*, *ff*, *rit.*, *(s)mf*, and *ff*. The fifth staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature. It includes markings for *Carefree; Con Rubato* (♩=180), *p*, and *flautando*. The sixth staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp and a 3/4 time signature. It includes markings for *(s)mf*, *molto sul pont.*, and *pp*.

Carefree; Con Rubato (♩=180)

p flautando

(s)mf *molto sul pont.* *pp*

poco sul pont

ord.

rit. a tempo

p 3 3 (*s*)*mf* *p*

cresc. *mf*

rit. a tempo
col legno tratto

2 0 (0) 0 2 *p* *ppp*

(sempre tratto)

pppp *ppp*

rit. a tempo
arco (ord.)

pp *cresc. possibile* *p* *p* *mf*

Poco adagio (♩=76) accel. Tempo I

c. l. battuto arco

p *cresc.* *f* (*s*)*mp*

a tempo

rit.

fff *mf*

to stopped note **Carefree**

p 3

rit. al fine

mf pizz *f* arco *p*

sul tasto

pizz. (like a slow roll) 3

c. l. battuto

mp *p* *mp* *p*

Detailed description: The image shows three systems of musical notation. The first system is in bass clef with a 12/8 time signature, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. It includes a 'to stopped note' instruction with a fermata. The second system is in treble clef, marked 'rit. al fine', and includes dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *p*, with 'pizz' and 'arco' markings. The third system is in bass clef, marked 'c. l. battuto', and includes dynamics *mp* and *p*, with a 'pizz. (like a slow roll)' instruction and a triplet. The title 'Carefree' is centered above the first system.

III. Homage

Jagged; Not too metric (♩=ca.100)

*sempre pizzicato (quasi guitarra)**

f *mp* *f*

f *p* *mp* *rit.*

a tempo *p* *f* *ff* *f*

p *mp* *mf* *mp* *rit.*

Tempo I *f* *ff* *mp* *f* *mp*

rall. *mf* *p* *pp*

mandolin-style tremolo (glissando ad libitum)

a tempo *mp* *mf* *mp* *poco rall.*

*The player should be seated with the viola resting in his or her lap (in "banjo position").

a tempo **Tempo I** **Semplice**

pp *ff* *p*

metallico **Tempo I** **Semplice**

mf *f* *ff* *mf* *mp*

ad libitum

mf *ff* *mp*

ff *mp* *ppp* gently brush finger across string

rit. **Tempo I**

mp *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp*

ff *pp* *fff* *ppp*

continue tremolo through silence
(it is optional to continue pantomiming
the tremolo for several seconds for
dramatic visual effect)

IV. Rhapsodic Reprise

Leisurely ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 92$)

(arco) *f* rich *p* *rall.* *a tempo*

f *ffp* *p* *accel.*

pizz. *arco* *p* *ff* *mp*

pizz. *arco* *ff* *mf* *f* *ff* *mp* *sul pont.*

Very Slowly *wispy (pont.)* *accel.* *to ord.*

pp *cresc. poco a poco*

ord. *gradually begin to bounce stroke* *mf* *cresc. poco a poco*

Musical score for a piano exercise, measures 135-144. The score is in 3/8 time, key of D major (F# and C#). It features a continuous eighth-note pattern with slurs and ties. Measure 135 starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 138 includes the instruction "begin smoothing out stroke". Measure 140 includes "cresc." and "rit." markings. The piece ends with a repeat sign in measure 144.

Tempo I, con rubato

ff *accel.* *rit.* *f*

Moderately Fast (♩=ca.112) *ff* *mf* *f* *rall.* *mf*

Carefree *f* *3* *mp* *p*

ff *p* *ff* *pp* *ff* *mf* *cresc.*

Held Back *rit.*

accel. *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *3* *fff* *wild*

ad lib. *fff*

-CDL
November 11, 2011; Nashville, TN
Revised/Completed January 30, 2016; Baton Rouge, LA

APPENDIX E: SCORE TO SUITE FOR VIOLA AND PIANO

CHRISTOPHER D. LOWRY

Suite for Viola and Piano

Opus 5
(2008-2009)

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- I. "...veiled countryside" (~6'45")
- II. "...unencumbered youth" (~3'30")
- III. "...endless night" (~2'45")
- IV. "...into a shadow" (~3'40")
- V. "...peace transcendent" (~11')

Total Duration: approximately 27-28 minutes

This piece received honorable mention in the 2010 New York Art Ensemble Composition Competition.

My Suite for Viola and Piano explores many different timbres and effects that can be produced on both the viola and piano as well as many different compositional styles and voices. Each of the five movements represents a certain kind of dream. The first movement, titled "... veiled countryside," is meant to depict a dream of one's homeland. Inspired greatly by the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Ernest Bloch, the pastoral and ethereal nature of the piece helps to illustrate this idea. This movement is driven by two main ideas: chord progressions based on open fourths and fifths, and a lush, lyrical melody reminiscent of an English folk tune. These two ideas work together, forming a picture of a bucolic landscape enshrouded by mist.

The second movement, "...unencumbered youth," is a short rondo depicting a flashback of one's childhood. The harmonic language (an accidental echo of Korngold), effects such as *pizzicato* and *col legno* (striking the strings with the wood of the bow), as well as sudden meter and key changes represent the carefree nature of childhood. Though generally light and spry in feel, the piece builds in energy towards the end, signifying a child dancing around with wild abandon.

The first of two nightmares, the third movement is a short, relatively undeveloped adagio. As the title, "...endless night," suggests, the tone of the piece is dark and mysterious. Influenced by the music of Paul Hindemith and Dmitri Shostakovich, this movement expands beyond the boundaries of Western tonality and makes use of such effects as quarter-tones and *scordatura* (essentially a "drop-tuning" of the viola's lowest string). It begins with a strong statement, played by unaccompanied viola in its low register, and ends fading into the distance, with the piano playing soft planing chords *una corda* and the violist bowing the tailpiece, creating a sound not unlike that of someone groaning.

The fourth movement, "...into a shadow," begins with the dreamer lying awake in bed, bombarded by thoughts and worries, and then slipping into a deep sleep, in which occurs the second of two nightmares. The music leading up to the dream has an almost "folk-like" feel, akin to an Irish fiddle tune, but with Baroque-style chording and counterpoint; it continues at an almost constant ostinato, symbolizing the monotony of the dreamer's jumbled thoughts. The nightmare itself, in contrast to the one in the preceding movement, is more restless, paranoid, and almost aggressive in feel. Dissonant piano chords, embellished with the harsh sounds of viola played *sul ponticello* (near the bridge), contribute to the nervous nature of the dream, which builds up to a series of descending glissandi, representing a dream of one falling to what looks like one's death. The dreamer awakes with a start, and, no matter how hard he tries, he is unable to get back to sleep.

The fifth movement, "...peace transcendent," is a dream of calm after the storm. Having just battled two nightmares, the dreamer is overcome by a feeling of overwhelming peace that transcends all troubles and fears. This tranquility is depicted through a sort of harmonic stasis, quite similar to the Vaughan Williams-esque atmosphere created in the first movement, but also owing much to Maurice Ravel and Aaron Copland. Equally as important as the peace is the struggle to retain this peace, an idea represented in the more "lucid" middle section of the movement. This lullaby section develops organically and builds in dynamics and intensity to the pinnacle of emotion, as the dreamer tries desperately to hold on to the sensation of peace, feeling that it is threatened. As things begin to calm down, the original themes return, this time slightly jaded by harmonic ambiguities. All darkness and negative emotions begin to evanesce as the piano modulates to a different key; a voice in the distance cries out, practically begging to stay in the old key, but it eventually resolves and peacefully fades away in the new key, almost as if it was trying to get there all along.

—Christopher Lowry

Suite for Viola and Piano

I. "...veiled countryside"

Op. 5
CHRISTOPHER LOWRY (b. 1988)

Grave, con poco rubato ($\text{♩}=52-60$)

ad libitum; quasi recitative

mp brooding

p somber

8

p

mp

p

sul D

mf

14

p

pp

n

rall.

mp

21 Semplice ($\text{♩}=ca. 56$)

mf

21 Semplice ($\text{♩}=ca. 56$)

mp

3

3

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25 *mp*

28 *p*

29 *pp*

29 *p* *sempre legato*

31 *mp*

33 *Con moto* *Moving forward*

33 *Con moto* *Moving forward*

35 *accel.* *poco rit.*

35 *accel.* *poco rit.*

35 *f*

35 *f*

35 *3* *3*

35 *3* *3*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piano and voice piece. It consists of five systems of staves. The first system (measures 25-28) features a vocal line in treble clef and piano accompaniment in grand staff. The second system (measures 28-31) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with a piano part marked 'sempre legato'. The third system (measures 31-33) shows a change in tempo and dynamics, with 'Con moto' and 'Moving forward' instructions. The fourth system (measures 33-35) includes 'accel.' and 'poco rit.' markings, along with a forte 'f' dynamic. The fifth system (measures 35-38) continues the piano part with triplets and a final 'poco rit.' marking.

57 *accel.*

accel.

p

8^{va}

Red.

60 Più mosso (♩=100)

mf

60 Più mosso (♩=100)

mp

(8).....

* *Red. ad lib.*

63

66

ff

Moving forward

Moving forward

mf

69 Keep moving

72 Keep moving

72 rit.

72 rit.

75 76 **Meno mosso** (♩=40)

75 76 **Meno mosso** (♩=40)

79 poco rall. Poco meno mosso (♩=36)

79 poco rall. Poco meno mosso (♩=36)

(8).....

8^{bb}.....

82 rit.

84 Con molto rubato

mf wailing *mp*

84 Con molto rubato

mp

rit.

85 Tempo I (♩=52-60)

85 Tempo I (♩=52-60)

p *somber*

90 con sord

mp *n* *mp*

p

97

p *pp* *n*

p *pp* *ppp*

una corda *8^{va}*

II. "...unencumbered youth"

Sprightly (♩=ca.108)
(senza sord)

Sprightly (♩=ca.108)

mp

senza Ped.

f

pizz.

mf

p

mf

8

14

20

The musical score is for a piece titled 'II. "...unencumbered youth"'. It is marked 'Sprightly' with a tempo of approximately 108 beats per minute. The score is in 8/8 time and consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 1-7) features a piano introduction with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The piano is marked 'mp' and 'senza Ped.'. The melody is marked 'f' and 'pizz.'. The second system (measures 8-13) continues the piano introduction. The third system (measures 14-19) features a more complex piano introduction with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The piano is marked 'mf' and 'p'. The score includes various musical notations such as staccato notes, slurs, and dynamic markings.

*The staccato notes here should all be played the same length (ie, the dotted quarters should not be any longer than the eighths); the only reason it is notated this way is for visual aid. This applies only to this movement.

26 27

mf

27

mp

32

ff

gliss.

38 43

43

sfz *mf*

legato

44

arco

f

50

55

60

65

70

p *8va*

76

p *8va*

81

rit. 83 A tempo (♩=♩)

rit. 83 A tempo (♩=♩)

mf

86

rit. molto rit.

rit. molto rit.

f

91 Andante, un poco adagio (♩=66) accel. Andante (♩=86)

mf *leggiere*

91 Andante, un poco adagio (♩=66) accel. Andante (♩=86)

mf

96 *mp* *cantabile*

p

102 105 *mp* *dolce*

105 *mp*

109 *mf* *cantabile*

mp

143 Tempo I (♩=ca.108)

143 Tempo I (♩=ca.108)

mf p

148

153 arco *f* *mp*

158 *mf* *f*

162

162

mf

f

167

170

170

f

f

172

(s)

mf

177

ffz

4

ff

4

182

col legno

arco

pizz.

mp

f

ff secco

fff

mp

f secco

III. "...endless night"

Lento espressivo, con rubato (♩=ca.45)
(arco) sul C

mf *misterioso* *mp* *mf*

6 *mp* *mf* *pp* *p*

9 ♩=ca.45

10 *accel.* *mf* (quarter sharp) *quasi gliss.*

13 **Più mosso** (♩=56) *mf*

14 *Tempo I* (♩=45) *ppp* *mf* *p* *n*

18 *Tempo I* (♩=45) *mp* *misterioso* *p* *una corda*

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 6, 10, 13, 14, and 18 marked. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *ppp* (pianississimo), and *p* (piano). Performance instructions include *Lento espressivo, con rubato*, *(arco) sul C*, *misterioso*, *accel.* (accelerando), *quasi gliss.* (quasi glissando), *Tempo I*, and *una corda*. There are also markings for *mf* (quarter sharp) and *n* (natural).

19 *con sord* *mf* *sul G* **22** *molto accel.* *sul D*

mp **22** *molto accel.* *mf*

(8)

23 *rall.* *ff* *rit.* *f* *mp*

28 *Tempo I* *(♩=45)* **29** *Opt: Scordatura (C to B)* *(Opt: 8va)* *fff* *mf* *p*

Tempo I *(♩=45)* **29** *ff* *p*

32 *rit.* *pp* *bow tailpiece** *mf* *rit.* *ppp*

una corda

(8)

*If the tailpiece doesn't produce the desired effect, the violist may opt to play an open C (or B).

IV. "...into a shadow"

Vivace ma non tanto ($\text{♩}=92-100$)
(senza sord)

f bold *pizz.* *f*

Vivace ma non tanto ($\text{♩}=92-100$)

f bold

7 arco *sempre f* *mf* *f*

13 *ff*

18 *f* *mf* *mf*

The musical score is for a piece titled "IV. ...into a shadow". It is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The tempo is "Vivace ma non tanto" with a metronome marking of quarter note = 92-100. The score is for a violin and piano. The violin part starts with a forte (*f*) and bold dynamic, playing a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piano part enters with a forte (*f*) and bold dynamic, playing a similar rhythmic pattern. The score includes various dynamics such as *f*, *mf*, *ff*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). There are also performance instructions like "senza sord" (without mutes) and "arco" (arco). The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 7, 13, and 18 indicated. The piece ends with a final chord in the piano part.

23

ff

29

32

32

mf

f

mf

34

f

39

f

mf

f

f

mf

f

44

48

48

mf

f

50

ff

55

f

ff

molto rit.

mf

ff

60

61 A tempo

at the frog

mf

61 A tempo

p subito

Red.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for a piano piece in 12/8 time, B-flat major. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 44 to 50. Measure 44 has a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 48 has a repeat sign in the right hand. Measure 50 has a *ff* dynamic. The second system covers measures 55 to 61. Measure 55 has a *f* dynamic. Measure 56 has a *ff* dynamic. Measure 57 has a *molto rit.* marking. Measure 58 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 59 has a *ff* dynamic. Measure 60 has a *mf* dynamic. Measure 61 has a *p subito* dynamic. There are repeat signs and first/second endings at measure 61. The score is marked with 'Red.' at the bottom.

64

simile

* *Red.* *

8^{va}

69

f

mp

8^{va}

74

(8)

79

82

82

mf

tr

84 *sul pont.*

mp *mf* *ff*

89 *ord.*

ff *f*

8va
senza Ped.

93 *simile*

(8)

97 *with coil of bow*
(opt: molto sul pont.)

ff *mp*

8va
L.H.
Ped. *

101 102 ord. *ff*

(8) 102 *f* *gliss.* *ff*

105 *f* *sfz*

109 *f*

113 *ff* *ff*

117 *molto rit.* Tempo I

fff Tempo I

sfz *ff*

8^{va}

122 *f bold*

122 *f bold*

128 *mf*

132 *ff* *f*

137 *jeté ad lib.* **ff**

142 **144** **144** **mf**

147 **mp** **mp** **ff**

152 **155** **155** **mf secco** **mp subito** **Red.** **8^{va}**

157

poco sul pont.

p hollow

pp subito

(8) * Ped.

162

165 ord.

ff

165

ff

f

gliss.

(8) * Ped. *

166

170

170

174

174

fff

178

178

V. "...peace transcendent"

Molto adagio con poco rubato ($\text{♩} = 52$)

Molto adagio con poco rubato ($\text{♩} = 52$)

p like windchimes

Red.
una corda

6 rit. A tempo

rit. *mp* harmonic glissando ad libitum* A tempo

pp *p* *3* ad lib. *p*

* *Red.*
tre corde

11

(8)

mp

15

sul ponticello poco a poco

(8)

l.v.

* *Red.*

*Vary speed of glissando and dynamics ad libitum for a quasi-improvisatory effect.

19

19

mp *quasi cadenza*
start very slowly; gradually accel. ad lib. *

*The transition from sixteenth notes to thirty-second notes should be natural and seamless; the note values are not to be taken literally, but rather the beamed groups should be used as a guidance point for how fast the notes should be played.

20

accel. *rall.*

(8)

*

21

A tempo *rit.* *Leisurely* (♩=60)

pp

A tempo *rit.* *Leisurely* (♩=60)

(8)

p *mf*

Ped. * *Ped.* * *8va* *Ped.*

168

51

8va

3

3

55

rit. 58 Freely (♩=66)

mp lush

rit. 58 Freely (♩=66)

15^{ma}

8^{va}

Red.

59

p

mp

15^{ma}

(8)

* Red.

63

f

(8)

*

67 **68** Poco adagio con moto (♩=80)

f

68 Poco adagio con moto (♩=80)

mp

Red.

69

71

mf

** Red.*

73

172

84 *sul D*
p
R.H. still p

87 *mf*
mp

90 *rit.*
rit.

93 *A tempo* ($\text{♩} = 72$)
mf
 93 *A tempo* ($\text{♩} = 72$)
mf
sempre legato

95

97

99

101

101

110 *molto accel.*

110 *molto accel.*

ff

gob

113 *molto rit.* *Molto maestoso* ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80-92$)

gob

ff ad lib. *R.H.*

ff *L.H.*

gob

(8)

116 *molto rit.*

gob

ff

(8).....]

118 Meno mosso (♩=60)

118 Meno mosso (♩=60)

mp

8^{va}

122

126

rit.

rit.

130

A tempo

mp

A tempo

8^{va}

mp subito

3

146

mp

f5^{va}

3

3

3

*

150

rit. Tempo I (♩=52) 153

p

p

sul G

rit. Tempo I (♩=52) 153

pp

pp

pp

8^{va}

154

rit.

rit.

p

ppp

158

161

A tempo

con sord
(heavy mute; preferably a metal practice mute)

p

A tempo

(slow roll occurring on the beat)

pp

p

una corda

164

rit.

pp

rit.

(slow roll)

pp

-CDL
November 2009; Nashville, TN
Revised 2011/2017

VITA

Originally from Nashville, Tennessee, Christopher Lowry is emerging as one of the leading violists and most performed composers of his generation. A two-time winner of the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition (winning Yuri Bashmet's "President of the Jury Prize" in 2013 and "The Jury Panel Prize" for most convincing performed of the commissioned test piece in 2016), Lowry has won prizes in the Lewisville Lake Symphony International String Competition (2015), The American Prize in Composition (Orchestral and Chamber Divisions, 2016), 2016 Oklahoma Youth Winds Composition Competition, 2016 Salford International Composing Contest, 2016 Alabama Symphony Orchestra Call for Scores, 2016 BandWidth Music Festival Call for Scores, 2016 Missouri Composers Orchestra Project Composition Competition, 2016 ABLAZE Orchestral Masters Call for Scores, NAFME Composition Competition (2015, 2012), Frank Van Der Stucken Composition Award (2015), Nashville Philharmonic Orchestra Composition Competition (2015), and the Anton Stadler International Bassett Clarinet Composition Competition (2010), among others. Lowry's orchestral piece *Golden Rhapsody* received honorable mention in the 2016 Maurice Ravel International Composer's Competition. He is also a two-time winner of the World Projects Composition Competition, winning in 2015 with *Tranquillo* for Orchestra (premiered in Carnegie Hall, June 2016) and in 2016 with *Calm After - Chorale-Fanfare for Orchestra* (to be premiered June 2017, Walt Disney Concert Hall).

Lowry has appeared as soloist with the Louisiana State University Symphony, LSU Philharmonia, LSU Camerata, Louisiana Sinfonietta, Acadiana Symphony, Lewisville Lake Symphony, Vanderbilt University Orchestra, Nashville Philharmonic Orchestra, and Eastern Music Festival Orchestra, among others. His music has been recorded by the Brno Filharmonie

(Czech Republic) and performed by the Nashville Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Imperial Symphony, Nashville Philharmonic, Louisiana State University Symphony, Austin Peay State University Symphony, Middle Tennessee State University Symphony, Vanderbilt Wind Symphony, Central Band of the Royal Air Force, “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band Chamber Ensemble, and many others.

Lowry is currently the principal violist of both the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra and the Louisiana Sinfonietta, and the co-principal violist of the Acadiana Symphony. He received his Master’s Degree in Viola Performance from LSU and his Bachelor’s Degree in Viola Performance with a Concentration in Composition from Vanderbilt University’s Blair School of Music.